19TH ALL-UNION CONFERENCE OF THE CPSU

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General Secretary of the
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ON PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS OF THE 27TH CPSU CONGRESS AND THE TASKS OF PROMOTING PERESTROIKA

REPORT BY MIKHAIL GORBACHEV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CPSU CENTRAL COMMITTEE

June 28

Comrade delegates,

The basic question facing us, delegates to the 19th All-Union Party Conference, is how to further the revolutionary restructuring launched in our country on the initiative and under the leadership of the Party, and to make it irreversible.

That question springs from our very life. It is being widely discussed inside the Party and by the people. And it depends on our answer whether the Party will be able to fulfil the role of political vanguard in the new stage of development that Soviet society has embarked upon.

The past three years of our life may quite legitimately be described as a radical turn. The Party and the working people have managed to halt the country's drift towards an economic, social and spiritual crisis. Society is now more aware of its past, present, and future. The perestroika policy, as translated into concrete socio-economic programmes, is becoming the practical business of millions of people. That is the substance of the political situation in the country.

We can see how society has rallied. The country's spiritual life has become more diverse, more interesting, and richer. Many ideas of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin previously treated one-sidedly, or totally hushed up, are being rethought. The creative nature of scientific and humane socialism is being revived in the struggle against dogmatism.

People have become aware of their responsibility, and are shaking off apathy and estrangement. The winds of change are improving the moral health of the people. Democratisation has released a powerful flood of thoughts, emotions, and initiatives. Assertion of the truth and glasnost, is purifying the social atmosphere, giving people wings, emancipating the consciousness, and stimulating activity.

That is a striking and impressive process, comrades, and all the honest and forward-looking people in the country have joined it. The forces of revolutionary renewal are consolidating. People have put their faith in perestroika, and they demand that we keep moving forward and only forward.

The working class is displaying a high degree of awareness and good organisation. As the unusual, the new and the complicated are invading our lives, the working class is again demonstrating its splendid political and moral qualities, its truly civic, statesmanlike approach to things, and backing perestroika by its labour. This enables the Party to carry out revolutionary changes with assurance.

The farmers have reacted with deep interest. The Congress of Collective Farmers has demonstrated its powerful charge of energy in favour of perestroika. Perestroika's advocates in agriculture are boldly adopting new ways of working, relying on science, picking effective technologies, and showing that they are ready to try out, search, and even take risks for the sake of progress, to work with complete dedication and with a sense of responsibility, skilfully, for their own benefit and for the good of their country.

Perestroika has confirmed Lenin's well-known idea that the intelligentsia is acutely sensitive socially, and responsive to social change. It has responded eagerly to the Party's appeal to put society's intellectual and spiritual potential completely at the service of perestroika. It has wholeheartedly supported the lesson of truth given by the 27th Congress, and shown profound understanding of the Party's decisions of the past three years.

In short, the main political result of the post-April 1985 period has been a change in the entire social climate, a beginning of the materialisation of the ideas of renewal, and the Soviet people's mounting support for the Party's perestroika policy.

But does this mean that changes for the better are under way everywhere, that they are going on in full gear, and that the revolutionary transformations have become irreversible?

No, it does not. If we want to be realists, comrades, we must admit that this has not yet occurred. We have not yet coped with the underlying reasons for the retarding factors, we have not yet everywhere set in motion mechanisms of renewal, and in some spheres have not even worked out any such mechanisms. The capability of a large number of Party organisations is no match as yet for the tasks of perestroika. What we need are new, qualitative changes in our development, and that calls for cardinal solutions and for vigorous and imaginative action.

We are facing many intricate questions. But which one of them is the crucial one? As the CPSU Central Committee sees it, the crucial one is that of reforming our political system.

The Central Committee has expounded its platform in the Theses for the Conference. We did not intend to give ready-made answers to all matters. We figured that new ideas and proposals would arise in the course of the discussion, and that the Conference might take them into account. Its decisions then will really be a collective achievement of the whole Party and people.

It follows that the political objective of our Conference is to examine the period after the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Congress of the CPSU comprehensively and critically, to enrich the strategy and specify the tactics of our changes, and define the ways, means and methods that would assure the steady advancement and irreversibility of our perestroika, and to do so in the spirit of Lenin's traditions and with reference to available experience.

I. TO DEVELOP AND DEEPEN PERESTROIKA

1. To Assess Achievements Self-Critically

Comrades, revolutionary renewal is reaching ever deeper into the economy, that decisive sphere of life.

We have embarked on a deep-going reform of the system of economic management, truly radical in aims and scale. A considerable part of the primary cells of the economy are adopting the principles of complete operational autonomy (khozraschot) and self-financing in accordance with the Law on the State Enterprise. The recently enacted Law on Cooperatives is paving the way for a large cooperative sector in the Soviet economy, and for broad use of diverse forms of cooperation in all economic fields.

A restructuring of intra-production labour relations has begun on the basis of contractual and lease arrangements, which combine the advantages of public ownership with the personal interest of the individual, a proprietory approach, and civic self-assertion. Visible impulse has been given to self-employment.

A number of far-reaching decisions of a fundamental nature have been adopted, determining the content of perestroika in the main economic fields and in the social sphere, and they are being put into effect.

The economy is gradually gaining pace. Last year, for the first time, the entire accretion of the national income was obtained by increasing the productivity of labour. Per capita real incomes have begun to grow again: they have gone up 4.6 per cent in the past two years of the current five-year plan.

Fifteen million square metres more housing is being opened for tenancy each year as compared with the previous, eleventh, five-year period. We are reorganising public education and health in all earnest. The birth rate has gone up while the death rate has dropped. This is related to no small extent to the war we have declared on hard drinking and alcoholism.

This year, too, the socio-economic situation has been improving steadily. The national income is growing more rapidly than planned, while the number of those employed in material production has been going down in absolute terms. The output of consumer goods is rising at priority rates, which has made it possible to fulfil commodity turnover target for the first five months of this year. Sales of food products and other goods have risen 5.9 per cent as compared with the same period last year, and the volume of consumer services has increased 13.5 per cent.

House-building and construction of community projects has been going on at a faster rate. Construction of flats and cottages has increased six per cent, that of secondary schools 22 per cent, of nurseries and kindergartens, clubhouses and cultural centres some 30 per cent, and hospitals as much as 100 per cent.

Those are tangible fruits of perestroika. But, comrades, we have got to be self-critical; we must see clearly that despite all the positive things, the state of affairs in the economy is changing too slowly, especially if we judge by the end result, that is, the people's standard of living.

What are the reasons for this?

Frankly speaking, comrades, we have underestimated the extent and gravity of the deformations and the stagnation of the preceding period. There was a lot we simply did not know and did not see until now: the neglect in various fields of the economy turned out to be more serious than we had initially thought.

How serious the situation is, may be judged, among other things, by the country's financial situation. For many years, state budget expenditures grew more rapidly than the revenue. The budget deficit is pressing down upon the market, undermining the stability of the rouble and of monetary circulation as a whole, and giving rise to inflationary processes.

I think, however, that while speaking of the mistakes and bitter lessons of the past, we should be no less exacting and no less principled towards ourselves, towards the present, than we are towards our predecessors, that we must analyse not only the successes but also the mistakes and the lessons to be drawn from our activity of the past three years, the mistakes and faults committed in the course of perestroika. And in this context, we must be self-critical and admit that we could have accomplished far more than we have in these three years in the main perestroika areas, and above all in heightening the efficiency of our economy and improving its ultimate results.

It is a fact, after all, that the country is still spending too much fuel, electric power, and metal per unit of national income. Hence the shortage of resources despite high production figures, which compels us to allocate ever greater funds to building up the production of raw materials, fuel, and energy.

To break this vicious circle, we are radically modernising our engineering industry as the decisive condition for accelerating scientific and technological progress, and restructuring our national economy as a whole. This, we could say, is an unprecedented programme. And it calls for extraordinary effort not only of the engineering industry itself, but also of the chemical industry, metallurgy, other industries and, of course, in the sphere of research and development. Work has already been launched, but it is not commensurate as yet with the scale of the set objectives, and is proceeding too slowly, especially in such vanguard areas as micro-electronics, computer technology, and development of new materials. Directly responsible for this is the USSR Council of Ministers' Bureau of Engineering, the USSR State Committee for Science and Technology, and the people who are running the engineering industry. To be sure, structural change in the economy as a whole is also proceeding too slowly. This means that most of the problems which had piled up in the past have not been tackled. That, too, is a reflection of current approaches to economic management.

And one more thing. As you may recall, the June Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee referred to the need for combining the attainment of the long-term strategic aims with the maximum satisfaction of the people's vital needs. Structural perestroika and radical economic reform are fundamental

processes. They will take much time, effort, and resources. While carrying them into effect, we shall also have to resolve the urgent problem of improving the people's wellbeing. This line stems entirely from the objective of enhancing the social orientation of our development set by the 27th Congress of the Party.

How are these objectives being carried out?

Let me begin with the food problem, which is probably the most painful and the most acute problem in the life of our society.

Some advances are on hand. But they cannot satisfy us. In substance, the increase we have achieved in food output has largely been used to cover the demand connected with the growth of the population. And that, comrades, means that we need other, still higher rates of building up food resources. We have neither the moral nor the political right to tolerate the delay in resolving the food problem.

A legitimate question: why are we taking so long to make headway here? There is no denying that many of the reasons go far back to the past when the principles of agricultural development had been gravely undermined. But this does not in the least justify the present faults. It would appear that all the knots have been untied. The collective and state farms, the districts, regions, and republics have been granted the broadest possible rights for increasing the output of crop and animal farming. Yet so far the desired result is out of reach. What is more, many of the recent decisions are not understood; they encounter procrastination and all sorts of bureaucratic hindrances, and, all too often, plain reluctance to work in a new way.

This conclusion is borne out by the often different results achieved in regions with the same natural and economic conditions. The situation is improving visibly wherever people tackled things with due vigour and really made the most of the new opportunities. Take Byelorussia, Lithuania, the Altai Territory, take Belgorod, Volgograd, Zhitomir, Lipetsk, Orel, Khmelnitsky, and Tselinograd regions. Here the output of animal products is rising steadily, with the result that food supplies have visibly improved.

But why did food supplies improve in Belgorod Region, and why did they not improve in the neighbouring Kursk Region? Why did the farmers in Tselinograd Region supply more meat, more milk and vegetables to retail outlets, while those in North Kazakhstan and a few other neighbouring regions have failed to do likewise?

Examples of this kind, comrades, are plentiful, as they say. What is worse, output of many farm products has even dropped in Vologda, Kaliningrad, Kirovograd, Kurgan and Yaroslavl regions, and the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic. Elements of stagnation are still seen in the agriculture of Uzbekistan, Moldavia, and the Transcaucasian republics. This means that much depends on the attitude, the competence of the managers, and their ability to run things the new way.

It seems to me that the search for ways of improving food supplies must continue everywhere, and notably in those regions and republics where the situation has not changed or is improving too slowly. This should be done with the involvement of all people, based on a deep-going analysis of the state of agriculture.

On what aspects must attention be concentrated? Experience shows that the shortest and most dependable way of achieving the desired output of food is broad introduction everywhere of lease arrangements and other effective forms of organising and stimulating labour. That is the key element of the current agrarian policy.

The results achieved by collectives that have lease or contractual arrangements have proved that crop yields and animal productivity can be raised in a relatively short time, that labour productivity can be substantially heightened, that losses can be reduced, and that high-quality farm products can be produced. Precisely this experience, comrades, yields the answer to the main question, that of how soon the country can resolve the food problem. Everything depends on how quickly we can arouse people's interest and promote the work of contractual and lease collectives, on how broadly we enlist farmers in this process and make them true masters on the farm.

Certainly, while doing so we must also continue to build up the material and technical facilities in agriculture and the food industry. Urgent measures must be taken to improve transportation, storage and processing of farm products. If we manage to reap, transport, store and process the harvest promptly, and to deliver the product to the consumer in good time, we will increase food consumption by 20 to 30 per cent at the present level of productivity in crop and animal farming.

This obvious potentiality has got to be used. We have drawn up a concrete programme for improving the processing, storing and transportation of farm products, and have earmarked 77,000 million roubles for this purpose in the remaining years of the 12th and in the 13th five-year plan periods. Now we must organise things skilfully, and use these resources effectively so as to improve the situation radically in the shortest possible time.

Broad development of cooperatives, introduction of khozraschot, of lease contract arrangements, and of other advanced forms of organising and stimulating labour—all this objectively requires radical change in running the agro-industrial complex. Practice has shown that agro-industrial bodies are no longer effective at district and regional levels in their present shape. It seems that we should follow the example of the Tula farmers that has already been picked up by many districts, regions and republics. The reference is to voluntary association of collective and state farms to create joint services and managerial bodies. The farmers know better what forms of management and what services they need.

As for the local Soviets and Party bodies, it is their duty to help and support the restructuring, the radical change of the methods of management on the farms. And those who are holding up the process, who are creating hindrances, must be resolutely put out of the way, as the collective farmers' congress has already said.

And a few words about another important problem. Whatever resources we put into agriculture, they will not yield the desired results if no concern is shown for the individual, for his conditions of work and life. I should like to say a few words specifically about social development in the countryside. Here society has accrued a considerable debt. Housing, social and cultural conditions, and medical services are of a low standard in many districts. And add to this the unsatisfactory amenities in village homes, irregular power supplies, difficulties in using domestic appliances, and the poor state of roads.

More far-reaching than ever are the measures taken in the current five years to improve social conditions in villages. A large programme of change is under way, particularly, in the Non-Black Earth Area of Russia, a most important region of our country. It is essential that farmers everywhere should feel a tangible improvement of living and working conditions within the next few years. This line should be followed consistently in future as well. The State Planning Committee and the USSR Agro-Industrial State Committee must act on this guideline when drawing up the plan for the thirteenth five-year period.

In short, comrades, the substance of the current agrarian policy is to change the relations of production on the farms. We must restore the economic balance between town and countryside, and release to the utmost the potential of collective and state farms by promoting diverse contractual and lease arrangements. We must overcome the estrangement between farmer and soil. We must make the farmer sovereign master, protect him against command methods, and cardinally change the conditions of life in villages. That is the only way to rapidly heighten the efficiency of the agro-industrial sector, and to secure a radical improvement in food supplies across the country.

A few words about the housing problem. We have tackled a most important task, that of providing practically every family with a separate flat or a cottage by the year 2000. To accomplish this, as you know, we shall have to build more than 35 million flats and cottages. Though the situation in house-building has begun to change for the better, it is still fairly tense because people have been waiting for flats for years.

We have therefore adopted extraordinary decisions, and substantially increased the volume of state-funded house-building, while cutting back on investments in industrial construction. We are also letting work collectives that have gone over to khozraschot build their own housing. Tangible steps have also been taken to promote the building of condominiums and individual cottages. The idea here is to meet people's wishes to have a cooperative flat or their own cottage. Hence, all bans and restrictions have been lifted as to the size and height of the buildings. Since people are spending their earnings on it, let them build what they may need at present or in the future. The many proposals on letting people pay the state the cost of their flats so as to be able to leave them to their heirs, seem to be reasonable as well.

The decisions to accelerate house-building have earned general approval. Everywhere, things have begun to change for the better. But new problems are arising. The building facilities and the building materials industry are falling short of the rising demand. Much has got to be accomplished through the use of all resources available in regions, territories and republics. Much also depends on the engineering industry, for it must supply builders and building materials manufacturers with the most advanced technology and equipment. And all this has to be done in a workmanlike fashion, without delay.

Finally, a few words about meeting consumer demand and building up trade and services. The changes that are seen here have failed to solve the main problem: the supply of goods and services is still lagging behind people's increasing purchasing capacity, which is due largely to the neglected state of that field and to the attitude towards it.

Much depends on the light industries. Today, as the saying goes, we are reaping the fruits of our disregard for them over the years. The enterprises concerned are using outdated equipment and a lot of hard manual labour. All this is affecting efficiency, the quantity and quality of production, and the stability of the personnel. Measures have now been taken to remedy the situation. Considerable funds have been allocated. Enterprises are being modernised with the use of both domestically produced and imported equipment.

But there are also other reasons. The slow build-up of the production of consumer goods is largely due to disadjustments in the economic mechanism and to ineffective incentives. Most of the enterprises that come under USSR ministries and departments and that are expected to produce durables for the market, consider this a secondary assignment and go to all lengths to sidestep it.

We must create a powerful up-to-date consumer industry as soon as possible. This applies not only to light industries, but also to defence factories and enterprises of the heavy industry whose contribution to the production and supply of consumer goods has got to be visibly enhanced. Not only as concerns quantity, but also quality.

Local government bodies bear a special responsibility for supplying goods and services. No few models of real initiative and enterprise are to be found in the republics and regions in bringing enough locally-made commodities to the market. But all too many regions tend to rely too much on others, trying to secure delivery of goods that could quite easily be produced on the spot. This approach is now unforgivable, for extensive opportunities have been created for the development of cooperatives and self-employment. Tangible results have been achieved wherever this was promptly understood and requisite conditions were provided, with new types of goods and services appearing on the market. And this can only be welcomed.

In short, the attitude towards this matter, which concerns the vital interests of people, has got to be changed radically, both at the centre and locally.

2. To Consistently Carry Forward the Radical Economic Reform

Comrades, examining the progress of perestroika, we should specifically single out the progress of the radical economic reform.

The conversion of enterprises to khozraschot, self-financing and self-management, is letting the personnel really feel their new rights, and also an uneasy burden of responsibility. And though the reform has only just begun, and the new methods of management are only just being introduced, this is already having a positive effect on many production and social problems, and the situation at enterprises as a whole.

During the current year, enterprises operating along new lines have not only reached their output targets, but have also visibly improved their economic results. This is highly important.

But the main thing today is to draw lessons from the difficulties of the initial stage of the reform. Practice has thrown light on the things that are making the new economic mechanism falter. To some extent this is due to the fact that not all its elements have as yet been set in motion, that we began the reform on the march, as it were, in the middle of a five-year plan, when the structural positions of the plan had already been defined, when outdated prices and the old centralised methods of distributing resources were still operative.

This explains a lot. But not everything by far. Difficulties arose largely due to the tenacity of managerial stereotypes, to a striving to conserve familiar command methods of economic management, to the resistance of a part of the managerial personnel. In some cases, indeed, we are running into undisguised attempts at perverting the essence of the reform, at filling the new managerial forms with the old content. All too often, ministries and departments depart from the letter and spirit of the Law on the Enterprise, with the result, as many economic managers admit, that it is not being fully carried out.

This is borne out by how plans of enterprises for the current year were worked out, with the previous system of obligatory production quotas being, in effect, sustained under the guise of state orders. This is nothing but abuse on the part of the ministries in the absence of requisite control, or in some cases the result of condonement, by the State Planning Committee and standing organs of the USSR Council of Ministers.

And what is most intolerable is that enterprises are being compelled by means of state orders to manufacture goods that are not in demand, compelled for the simple reason that they want to attain the notorious "gross output" targets. Fiat of this sort was practised even in the case of such large enterprises as the Urals Engineering Works, the Altai Agricultural Machinery Works, the Kurgan Wheeled-Tractor Works, and the Baku Tyre Plant, to say nothing of the mass of medium-size and small enterprises.

Oh, how many faithful servants we have of "gross output"!

Need I say that this is wholly contrary to the sense of the reform, that it amounts to conservation of managerial methods that have driven our economy into a dead end.

It would seem that by now everybody should see that there is no returning to the old methods. Yet we still hear people say that if the plan fails to exert pressure on an enterprise, it will not strive to improve its economic indicators. And at first glance, this talk seems to be rational. But the facts show that it is not. Let me cite just one case.

Many people feared that extending the rights of enterprises and reducing the range of imposed indicators would tend to reduce planned results and necessitate revision of the five-year-plan targets. It is indeed true that the total profit, as planned this year for industrial enterprises that have gone over to full khozraschot, was 4,500 million roubles below the target. Some eager devotees of the old methods rubbed their hands in glee: see what reliance on exclusively economic levers and incentives led to.

But how did things proceed in practice? In fact, the enterprises in question exceeded their profit target for the first five months of this year by 2,500 million roubles. The accretion at enterprises that have, adopted full khozraschot amounted to 12.8 per cent against the 10.2 per cent at enterprises working the old way. The important point here is that the profit increase was chiefly achieved by lowering costs and reducing consumption of materials.

Frankly, this result was quite unusual for our economy of late. It deserves to be closely and thoroughly examined. What can be said on this score? Evidently, no effective incentives have yet been introduced in the economic mechanism to prompt enterprises to accept higher plan assignments. We must think about it. What is important for us in the final analysis, comrades, is the end result. And if the economic mechanism has begun to function and secures more tangible results, that is exactly what we need. An edifying lesson! It must at last prompt the planning agencies to revise their approaches to planning, and to shift the emphasis from "plan pressure" to economic levers and incentives.

Experience has shown, comrades, that the progress of the economic reform calls for continuous attention by the CPSU Central Committee and the Government. Let's admit it, the distortion of the state order idea was spotted by them later than it should have been. The signals we received were not properly and promptly assessed. Now this mistake is being rectified. Government decisions will soon be issued on the procedure related to state orders.

In the initial stage of the reform, work collectives and managerial bodies also focused their attention on how to set economic norms. Here, too, we witnessed attempts of ministries and departments to practise diktat in relation to enterprises. Many of the ministries went out of their way to set norms whereby they could, as before, channel funds from efficient in favour of inefficient enterprises.

Considering the different starting potentials of various work collectives embarking on khozraschot and cost-effectiveness, such redistribution is probably justifiable to some extent. But the main purpose of norm-setting is to directly dovetail incomes with the end results, so that any improvement in the collective's work would be encouraged by higher incomes. We cannot tolerate any form of scrounging, be it overt or covert, and any opportunity to lead an untroubled life while doing poor work. Wage-levelling, I am sorry to say, has impressed itself much too strongly on our psychology and economic practices. We keep chasing it out of the door, as the saying goes, but it climbs back through the window.

We are running into the same problem in the reform of wages and salaries. The first results, it would appear, are promising. Collectives that have gone over to the new terms, have pushed up their productivity of labour, with payments for it also going up. But even here wage-levelling is not yielding ground. Enterprises that have been given the right to reward their more efficient workers and cut down the incomes of those who are lazy, wasteful, and idle, are using it much too timidly in fear of offending anyone.

We have not yet overcome approaches inherited from the period of stagnation in the activity of work collectives when the wages and salaries of workers, technicians, and engineers setting examples of creative, highly efficient, sometimes extraordinary labour are being artificially held down. Some norm-setting acts, too, deserve to be criticised in that respect. Need I prove that the most effective way of rooting out wage-levelling tendencies is to consistently carry through the principles of khozraschot not only in work collectives as a whole but also in their subdivisions and at every work place?

To put it plainly, the reform will not work, will not yield the results we expect, if it does not affect the personal interests of literally every person, if it fails to become every person's vital affair. One of the chief areas of the radical economic reform is broad promotion of the cooperative movement. The topic has been quite thoroughly discussed at the collective farmers' congress and the Supreme Soviet session that enacted the Law on Cooperatives. This has essentially paved the way for the utmost development of the reform. As the Central Committee sees it, promotion of the cooperative movement will open up extensive opportunities for resolving many of society's vitally important problems.

We have imparted to cooperatives the very meaning and the very role which Lenin ascribed to them. Now the emphasis is shifting to practice. And it is the immediate duty of the Soviets and the Party organisations to give every support to people who want to contribute increasingly to perestroika on a cooperative basis.

Comrades, the economic reform would have made much better headway if conservatism had not been so tenacious in the managerial apparatus. The methods of command and administrative fiat are hanging on doggedly. As the reform is being put into effect, we tangibly feel the resistance of the forces of inertia, this leading all too often to halfway or compromise decisions, and sometimes to errors.

It is a fact, comrades, that an attempt has been made to revive the former bureaucratic ministerial main departments under the guise of state production associations. In this way a rigidly centralised organisation with the old departmental partitions and an inflated apparatus was to have been substituted for the voluntary association of independent enterprises.

At the centre and locally, all too many people still reject the new forms of management that fit the conditions of democratisation and economic reform.

This also surfaced during the reduction of the managerial staffs of USSR and republican ministries and departments, and of regional and territorial managerial bodies. What is there to be said on this score? For us, this is a question of principle. We must firmly follow the line of reducing and cheapening the apparatus, and of heightening its efficiency. At the same time, it is essential that we see to it that people made redundant by these measures should not drift over to other offices, and that they should take jobs in production, in the services sphere, the cooperatives, the retail trade, and public utilities, where there is a labour shortage.

As we see, even a brief analysis of the processes related to the beginning of the reform shows that it is not an easy thing and that it calls for considerable and unflagging attention. Yes, there are difficulties. Nor are they ruled out in the future.

But the reform is spreading to ever broader spheres of the economy and showing that it is viable.

We must consider our accumulated experience and prepare thoroughly for completing the conversion in the beginning of 1989 of all enterprises in material production to a new managerial pattern. That is a most serious question, and no element of it is unimportant because the reform is going to affect more and more millions of working people.

The biggest mistake made in the past, which we must on no account repeat, is that the preparation of enterprises for working along new lines was carried out in the seclusion of offices. Wherever the working people and the councils of work collectives were not involved in carrying through the reform, wherever things were decided from above, in cloistered solitude—that is where the gravest faults sprang to the surface and many unforeseen difficulties arose. And this had its ill effects on the social mood of people, and on their attitude towards the reform.

The experience of the current year has impressed upon us the need for accelerating the conversion to wholesale trading in means of production. What do we see today? We see that for those who have gone over to khozraschot and self-financing, wholesale trading is not only desirable but also vitally necessary. Since all enterprises engaged in material production will operate on the basis of khozraschot as of the beginning of next year, we shall evidently have to change our approach, too, to the time of passage to wholesale trading in means of production, so as not to drag it out over many years, but to complete it within the current five years. I think that the State Planning Committee and the State Committee for Material and Technical Supplies will offer concrete proposals to that effect.

And, most certainly, many things now depend on the price reform. What I am referring to is a revision of wholesale and purchasing prices, retail prices, and tariffs. The unsettled state of this problem has complicated progress in the economic reform most seriously. Without a price reform we shall not be able to create normal relations in the economy, to secure a properly grounded assessment of the costs and results of production, and an equivalent exchange of goods and services, to stimulate scientific and technological progress, to encourage savings of resources, to normalise the situation on the market, and to carry out fair distribution according to labour.

How, for example, can we have economical production when the prices of raw materials and fuel are too low? This simply cannot be done. Or this question: while getting high profits for one group of commodities, the state is compelled, at the same time, to pay out tens of thousands of millions of roubles out of the budget in subsidies for another group of commodities. Yet it is all too well known that low, subsidy-backed, as well as unjustifiably high prices, do not stimulate growth of production and exercise an exceedingly negative effect on scientific and technological progress.

It should also be stressed that the price reform as such will not improve the economic situation unless we simultaneously settle the issue of financial balance, and put things in order in the financial and credit system, in the work of the banks, in the budget, and so on. That is why the price reform should be geared closely to the programme for the improvement of the financial situation in the economy. And that, in turn, is connected with the financial situation of every enterprise, with the work of every collective. This, too, should not be forgotten.

The price reform is bound to affect retail prices as well, because they are closely connected with the system of prices as a whole. Today, the retail prices of many food products, notably those of meat and milk, are considerably lower than the actual cost of producing them, lower than the state's procurement prices. The state is compelled to cover this difference in the form of a subsidy to the consumer. That is not a normal situation. It undermines the incentives for producing these products, and gives rise to a wasteful attitude, especially towards bread.

We know all this perfectly well, comrades. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to resolve this problem no matter how difficult it may be and no matter what doubts and fears it may create at first glance. A deep-going study is under way at present of the question of retail prices. Proposals on this score will be put up for thorough nationwide discussion.

There can be only one approach: any change in retail prices must on no account cause a drop in people's standard of living. Here is our approach: the funds which the state is paying out as subsidies today will be handed over in full to the population as compensation. As a result, the state will have no direct financial gain from the revision of retail prices, and the population will lose nothing either. The idea is to make the economic situation sounder, to create more favourable conditions for the operation of economic levers and incentives, for increasing production and raising its quality, for bringing enough food to the market as quickly as possible.

Much has been done to reconceptualise our foreign economic policy in the perestroika framework and with an eye to the radical economic reform. Here, too, fundamentally new approaches turned out to be necessary in order to make better use of the advantages of the international division of labour. Enterprises and associations of enterprises are now offered extensive access to the foreign market and an opportunity to establish direct foreign economic ties, to start on joint ventures.

As before, we give priority to relations with the socialist countries. Along with our friends, on a bilateral or multilateral basis, or in the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, we are tackling the key aspects of scientific and technological progress, and development of up-to-date forms of economic cooperation. Our long-term objective is to go over to a freely convertible rouble, and to shape a single socialist market.

We will also work for broader economic ties with capitalist and developing countries on a basis of mutual benefit. Here, too, we have set our sights on deep-going and comprehensive collaboration in science, technology, and production through various types of international cooperation and specialisation.

Comrades, fulfilment of the current five-year plan is not the only thing we must think about as we sum up the first results of the economic reform. It is essentially important to use the lessons of the first few years of perestroika to work out a strategy for the future and, first and foremost, for the thirteenth five-year plan period.

A single opinion is shaping in the Central Committee and the government: the concept of the thirteenth five-year plan and the country's subsequent development must profoundly and unswervingly adhere to the line of the April 1985 Central Committee Plenum and the 27th Congress of the CPSU concerning the social reorientation of our economy.

This means first of all that people's needs in quality food products must be satisfied, that the market must offer consumer goods and services of the desired range and of high quality, that the housing programme must be carried out, and the health service, public education, and culture improved. Among the top priority tasks is that of redoubling environmental protection efforts and cardinally improving the country's ecological situation. Given this approach, we can expect to settle the debts that have come down to us from the stagnation period and put our economy on the road of sound development in the people's interest.

Social reorientation of economic development and increasing the share of consumption in the national income must stand at the centre of our entire structural and investment policy, and become the cornerstone in the setting of the economy's rates and proportions. It is clear today that deep-going changes are essential, encompassing the economy as a whole from the sphere of services right up to the heavy industries and the defence industry.

The Central Committee of the CPSU hopes that the Conference will endorse this course.

Hence we should discuss one more question. It concerns the criteria and indicators of economic development. This is not the first time we have said that the rate of production growth is not important in itself, and that its importance derives from its real content, the actual satisfaction of the people's needs.

What is the use of the increase of the output of raw materials, fuel and energy if it is "swallowed up" by irrational and wasteful use of resources? And who needs any greater output of agricultural machinery if no one is buying it because of its low efficiency? And in the light industries, too, we do not need either high gross output figures or the volume of production as such, but a range of commodities that would meet the people's real demands.

We still cannot rid ourselves of the old approaches. We do not need millions of tons of steel, millions of tons of cement, or millions of tons of coal as such. What we need are concrete end results. For how long are we to revolve within the vicious circle of hopelessly outdated notions and formulas, such as "production for the sake of production" and "the plan for the sake of the plan"?

The State Planning Committee and the USSR Academy of Sciences must work out proposals on this score, so that planning in the thirteenth five-year period would be based on them, as would the assessment of the results of economic development.

Such, comrades, are some of the results of our work in the social and economic sphere, such are the contradictions and problems of the initial stage of the radical economic reform, and some of the ideas concerning the immediate and more distant future.

3. To Activate the Intellectual and Spiritual Potential of Society

Comrades,

Perestroika, the renewal of socialism is inconceivable without the maximum activation of the intellectual and spiritual potential of society, which is embodied in science, education, and the whole of culture. But merely stating this is not enough. It is necessary to act, moreover vigorously and on a large scale, taking into account, too, that throughout the world it is in this area that tremendous efforts are being concentrated and the flow of investment is increasing appreciably.

When perestroika was just beginning, we formulated the task of radically altering priorities, enhancing the role of the spiritual sphere, and overcoming its underestimation. Here, too, much has changed. A new socio-political atmosphere has arisen—an atmosphere of openness, freedom of creativity and discussion, of objective, unbiassed research, criticism and self-criticism. A genuine revolution in thinking is under way, without which a new life cannot be created.

The Party attaches great significance to the contribution of our scientists to perestroika. In the Central Committee's Theses it is emphasised that the Party's economic and social strategy is to accelerate scientific and technological progress, and, above all, to master the achievements of its present-day stage, which involves advances in high technologies: in microelectronics, robotics, information science, biotechnology, etc.

There are signs of favourable changes in the development of science and technology, the attitude to the technical standards of products is more exacting, and the results emerging from research organisations are being put to use more quickly. Big steps have been taken to change the systems of planning and funding research and development, providing them with the necessary materials, making faster practical use of scientific advances, and encouraging scientific work. These measures have had a favourable effect, although as yet it has not been possible to alter the situation radically.

The situation is particularly complex in basic research, which shapes the prospects of science, and of scientific and technological progress. Many inhibiting factors still make themselves felt, factors inherited from the days when command methods of management prevailed and when science was not infrequently forced to concentrate on research areas that did not follow from the logic of its own development, and, conversely, many promising new areas of research failed to receive timely support or were even banned.

The formulation of a number of well-founded tasks did not receive material or organisational backing, and this compromised science policy as a whole. Science was not integrated to a sufficient extent in the general national planning system as an inalienable component without which it is impossible to formulate or implement socio-economic policy in the broadest sense of the term. Scientists were seldom enlisted in making expert assessments of projects, decisions, and plans; in fact, their opinion—when out of keeping with the interests of government agencies—was ignored and, at times, suppressed.

As a result, the social status of science and the prestige of scientific work have in recent decades clearly declined. What is most disturbing is that in the years of stagnation science in the Soviet Union fell behind in several key areas and the prevailing mode of its development became geared to "catching up with" others. It is abnormal that the academic sector of science, which does the bulk of the basic research, receives a mere 6.8 per cent of the total funding of scientific work.

That is why it is not enough today merely to rectify all these errors and omissions in science policy. We are talking about a profound restructuring, about breaking down many established structures of the economic mechanism, and about improving internal relationships within science. What is needed is to establish a cardinally new national scientific potential, without which there can be no speedy breakthroughs in basic research, and on this basis to put into effect the whole set of programmes that have been drawn up for our socio-economic reorganisation.

Resolute measures are needed to improve the management of scientific and technological progress, and overcome departmental barriers. One of the ways of accomplishing this is through setting up interdepartmental scientific and technological complexes, engineering centres, and *ad hoc* teams for solving specific problems. It is also important that research organisations have begun to be closely integrated in the system of profit-and-loss accounting, and that a complete cycle is being established: research—machinery and technologies—investment—production—marketing—servicing.

To be sure, the potential of basic and applied science is built up over years and decades, but there also exist factors expediting scientific development. These are, above all, democratising the situation in science, and overcoming bureaucracy and armchair management, conservatism and monopolism. Ample scope must be provided for the maximum development of talent, creativity and self-government, competition on an equal footing, healthy rivalry of scientific ideas and opinions. A number of scientists have also raised the question of the expediency of diversifying the methods of organising research, and rationally combining state and cooperative forms here too.

Special attention must be given to developing the social sciences. It is they that suffered the most from the personality cult, from bureaucratic methods of management, from dogmaticism and from incompetent meddling. Following the 20th Congress of the CPSU there was, as is known, a noticeable increase in activity in the social sciences. New scientific areas and a new generation of scholars appeared, capable of doing things in a new way. But soon there was a resurgence of the voluntaristic approach to formulating problems in the social sciences, of dogmatic methods of solving them.

In the environment of perestroika, society is acutely in need of research in the social sciences. What we need is a genuine advancement of the social sciences on a Marxist-Leninist philosophical and methodological footing. There must be objective scientific studies of such problems of perestroika as the economic reform, the restructuring of the political system, democratisation, a humanitarian revival, interethnic relations, new political thinking, and many others. In other words, a society advancing towards a fundamentally new state is in need of an integral conception of its development, an understanding of the dialectics of processes and their contradictory reflection in the public mind, due consideration for the pluralism of opinions, and the framing of scientifically founded objectives.

The Party sees it as its task to continue encouraging a creative quest in the social sciences and adding to the theoretical arsenal of perestroika. But the attitude to science must undergo a radical change. "Unused" science sooner or later perishes, and such an attitude to scientific learning reduces practical work to a blind and feeble state. All this is unacceptable to us. So, while requiring much of scholars, we have to trust them more and provide all the conditions they need for their creative work, their quest of the new.

The tasks of accelerating scientific and technological progress must be seen in the general context of social development. Attention must be focussed, in the view of scientists, on analysing problems that are on the borderline between different sciences—natural, technical, and social. Close interaction between these sciences today assures revolutionary breakthroughs in all areas of scientific and technological progress. Accordingly, what is needed is for social studies to exercise a bigger influence on the whole of scientific and technological progress, on its human dimension. With proper account for the lessons of the past, we must arrange for the genuine and large-scale social assessment of scientific, technological, and engineering projects with the participation of the public at large so as to reduce to a minimum—better still, rule out completely—ecological and other damage which can be caused if these projects are designed and implemented without appropriate control.

In the past three years the Party and society have shown a steadily growing understanding of the enormous role of education as one of the fundamental factors in economic and social progress and spiritual renewal. We have critically assessed the situation in this sphere, too, and have drawn up a programme of changes in education. Large additional funds are being channelled into this sphere. Much headway is being made in computerising the process of instruction, and the pay of teachers has been increased.

Certainly, the expenditures on education and scientific research are high, but their lagging behind is immeasurably costlier. Without high standards of education, scientific research, general culture and proficiency on the job the objectives of perestroika cannot be achieved. Everything must be done so that the new generations of Soviet citizens enter their adult work and political life with high ideological and moral standards, a sound knowledge of their trade or profession, and broad cultural horizons, so that they are ready to assume the responsibility for the future of the country.

Soviet cultural workers have an immense part to play in the socialist renewal of our society. A consolidation of creative forces on the platform of perestroika has become a practical task of the Party in the post-April 1985 period. Today we can say that administrative methods in managing cultural affairs, lecturing and instructing artists are becoming a thing of the past. A competitive atmosphere of untrammelled creativity, based on the civic responsibility of the artist to his socialist society, is gradually arising in the spiritual sphere.

Inherent in the artistic culture is a living linkage and continuity of generations, which helps a person to sense his kinship with his people, their history and hopes for the future, to be guided in all his practical activities by lofty moral ideals.

In our political writings, literary and scientific publications there is now a discussion of unprecedented scope, frankness, and intellectual vigour concerning the ways of rejuvenating socialism, concerning history and the present day. This is a fine thing. The Party highly appreciates the growing contribution of the intelligentsia to perestroika. We welcome the increased social and political activities of people in the scientific, educational, and cultural world. We expect from them new discoveries and profound breakthroughs in all spheres of thought and spirit.

By and large, the processes in the cultural sphere are thus developing on a sound basis. But we would not be objective, we would be sinning against the truth, if we said that they were proceeding without contradictions and drawbacks which sometimes overstep the bounds of socialist values.

Both in society as a whole and among the intelligentsia there are instances of conservatism and the rejection of the new, there is a superficiality in evaluating current events and even irresponsibility in dealing with complex problems in our development.

Unfortunately, one sometimes observes that even in this time, which is so crucial for the country's destiny, some comrades just cannot rise above internal strife, group obsessions, and personal ambitions. There are also quite a number of people who react with annoyance to creative quests and who see mounting diversity as a departure from the principles of socialist art. This is understandable: for much too long uniformity, monotonous conformity, and mediocrity have been presented as hallmarks of progress. We still lack the habit to engage in debate, to dissent, to practise free competition. I have no wish to dramatise the situation; nor is there any particular reason for doing so. But it would be unwise to take no notice of such phenomena, to ignore them.

If one is to speak about the main trend in our policy in the scientific, educational, and cultural spheres during the period of perestroika, it may be seen as a return to Lenin's principles, as a shift to highlight the human being, to enrich the people spiritually. The Party sees its task in redoubling its efforts in the name of this humane goal.

4. Democratising International Relations

Comrades,

Perestroika in the USSR has become a factor of global significance. The cardinal changes in our own home have called for new approaches to international affairs as well.

In assessing Soviet foreign policy in the post-war period, we keep in mind that imperialism, in effect, created an extraordinary situation around us and our allies. The Western military bloc, headed by the United States, behaved towards socialism with candid aggressiveness. The military threat became for us a constant factor, and it has not been removed to this day. The Soviet Union together with its allies was simply bound to respond to this, as, for that matter, to the determined psychological warfare that was being waged against the socialist countries.

Nevertheless, while drawing lessons from the past, we have to acknowledge that command methods of administration did not spare the field of foreign policy either. It sometimes happened that even decisions of vital importance were taken by a narrow circle of people without collective, comprehensive examination or analysis, and, occasionally, without properly consulting friends. This led to an inadequate reaction to international events and to the policies of other states, if not to mistaken decisions. Unfortunately, the cost of this to the people and the implications of this or that course of action were not always weighed up.

In response to the nuclear challenge to us and to the entire socialist world it was necessary to achieve strategic parity with the USA. And this was accomplished. But, while concentrating enormous funds and attention on the military aspect of countering imperialism, we did not always make use of the political opportunities opened up by the fundamental changes in the world in our efforts to assure the security of our state, to scale down tensions, and promote mutual understanding between nations. As a result, we allowed ourselves to be drawn into an arms race, which could not but affect the country's socio-economic development and its international standing.

As the arms race approached a critical point, our traditional political and public activities for peace and disarmament began, against this background, to lose their power of conviction. To put it even more bluntly, without overturning the logic of this course, we could actually have found ourselves on the brink of a military confrontation.

Hence, what was needed was not just a refinement of foreign policy, but its determined reshaping.

This called for new political thinking. The foundations of that thinking were formulated by the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress. They placed our international activities in the conditions of perestroika on a philosophical footing. The new thinking is not a final and consummate doctrine. It is dialectical, which makes possible the constant perfection and development of our policy in keeping with the forward march of real life, and, needless to say, in keeping with our socialist choice and Leninist principles.

Just as in domestic affairs, here, too, the Soviet leadership turned to Lenin, to his experience: to act everywhere, in any situation, from a position of realism. Only such a foreign policy can effectively serve perestroika. Only in this case can it count on a realistic attitude on the part of those to whom it is addressed. Only in this case does it acquire the capability to help save the world from the impending threats.

As we analysed the contemporary world, we realised more clearly that international relations, without losing their class character, are increasingly coming to be precisely relations between nations. We noted the enhanced role in world affairs of peoples, nations, and emerging new national entities. And this implies that there is no ignoring the diversity of interests in international affairs. Consideration for these interests is an important element of the new political thinking.

From the standpoint of our day—with its mounting nuclear menace, heightening of other global problems, and progressing internationalisation of all the processes in a world becoming, despite all its contradictions, ever more integral and interdependent—we have sought a deeper understanding of the interrelationship between working-class interests and those of humanity as a whole, an idea built into Marxism from the outset. This led us to the conclusion that common human values have a priority in our age, this being the core of the new political thinking.

The new political thinking has enabled us to appreciate more fully how vitally important to contemporary international relations are the moral values that have over the centuries been evolved by nations, and generalised and spelled out by humanity's great minds.

In the course of our analysis of the fundamental changes in the world we are overcoming many stereotypes, which limited our options and, to a certain extent, supplied arguments to those who indulged in misrepresenting our real intentions.

A big role was played by our establishment of broad contacts with representatives of other countries—from heads of state and government to ordinary citizens, with universally recognised authorities in the scientific and cultural world, outstanding writers, leaders and delegations of political parties, public organisations and movements, with trade union, social-democratic and religious leaders, and members of parliament.

Such intensive direct contacts have made possible a "rediscovery", as it were, of the Soviet Union by the outer world, while we, for our part, have got the chance to obtain a better picture and understanding of the world around us, to take part in discussing its problems and in searching for ways of solving them, of extracting whatever is useful from ideas originating in other cultures and spiritual traditions, as was reflected, for example, in the 1986 Delhi Declaration. With the help of such "feedback" it has also become easier to reach mutual understanding on the significance of such values as freedom and democracy.

All this has imparted a dynamism to Soviet foreign policy and made it possible to come forward with a whole series of major initiatives.

These include the programme for the step-by-step elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000, the establishment of a system of universal security, the freedom of choice, a balance of interests, our "common European home", the restructuring of relations in the Asian and Pacific region, defence sufficiency and the non-offensive doctrine, the scaling down of arms levels as a means of strengthening national and regional security, the recall of forces from foreign territories and dismantling of bases there, confidence-building measures, international economic security, and the idea of directly projecting the authority of science onto world political affairs.

We have begun to base our contacts in relations between states on dialogue; in the sphere of disarmament, on a readiness to accept far-reaching reciprocal verification. This has made it possible to broaden the scope of trust far beyond the limits of the habitual philosophical spectrum. We thereby discovered a considerable potential of mutual understanding and of an acceptance of coexistence and cooperation even in influential quarters far removed from us ideologically.

Our open and sincere invitation to join us in common reflections and search has met with a major positive response in the world, while glasnost and perestroika have lent "tangible" cogency to our foreign policy ideas and initiatives.

This approach made possible such major breakthroughs in world political affairs and, above all, in the field of disarmament as Geneva and Reykjavik, which led to real progress in the process of negotiations and predetermined the success of the summit meetings in Washington and in Moscow, with the result that the entire international situation is changing.

In the context of the new thinking, consideration has been given to the situation in the socialist world. Together with our friends, we have endeavoured, in a comradely manner, to rid the internationalist essence of our relations of the sediment that has accumulated on them in the past. Personal contacts between the Party and state leaders have become livelier, more businesslike and more efficient. The foreign policy of the socialist community is being coordinated more effectively.

World socialism is going through a complex, crucial period. The fact that the socialist countries have advanced to new frontiers, that their potentials have been revealed nationally and internationally enhances the prestige and role of socialism in the world's development.

A key factor in the new thinking is the concept of freedom of choice. We are convinced that this is a universal principle for international relations at a time when the very survival of civilisation has become the principal problem of the world, its common denominator.

This concept stems from the unprecedented and mounting diversity of the world. We are witnessing such a phenomenon as the active involvement in world history of millions upon millions of people who for centuries remained outside its pale. These millions are taking to the arena of independent history-making in entirely new conditions. In an environment of a universally growing national awareness they will yet have their say in taking the road of their own choice.

In this situation the imposition of a social system, way of life, or policies from outside by any means, let alone military, are dangerous trappings of the past period. Sovereignty and independence, equal rights and non-interference are becoming universally recognised rules of international relations, which is in itself a major achievement of the 20th century. To oppose freedom of choice is to come out against the objective tide of history itself. That is why power politics in all their forms and manifestations are historically obsolescent.

In short, we are profoundly convinced that the new thinking and the policies based on it are a correct reflection of the urgent needs and imperatives of the contemporary world. They have revived hope and cleared the way to fundamental changes in human thinking.

In answer to the question which is uppermost in the minds of Soviet people and on which they want to hear an assessment of the work accomplished in three years—whether the war danger has been pushed back—we can say: yes, definitely.

In what can this be seen? First of all, in the fact that the axis of international affairs is shifting away from confrontation towards cooperation, mutual understanding, and negotiations that hold out the promise of specific results, first and foremost, with respect to weapons of mass destruction. There has been an improvement in Soviet-American relations. A treaty has been concluded on scrapping a portion of nuclear armaments. The European process has become brisker—at the interstate and, especially, at the non-governmental level.

The Geneva accords and the withdrawal that our military contingent has begun from Afghanistan have become an international milestone in the political settlement of regional conflicts, which are fraught with a danger to the world as a whole and which hinder the progress of nations.

From the platform of our Party Conference permit me, on behalf of the Party and the people, to express deep appreciation once again to the soldiers and officers, the civilian experts and all those whose life has been affected and who have been seared by this war. Our soldiers are leaving Afghanistan at the bidding of their country, which has displayed wisdom and has, during these years, acquired new political and moral experience, and a deeper understanding of the contemporary world, of its contradictions and difficulties in its march into the future.

All in all, comrades, an analysis of the already existing realities justifies the assumption that if it proves possible to consolidate and build upon these realities, the world at the turn of the century will be shaped by the following trends:

— a gradual demilitarisation and humanisation of international relations, with reason, knowledge, and moral principles, rather than selfish ambitions and prejudices, at long last motivating states in resolving numerous contradictions in the world and achieving a balance of interests, with the right of each to freedom of choice being recognised;

— assuring the security of states will shift increasingly from the sphere of a correlation of military potentials into the sphere of political interaction and the strict fulfilment of international commitments; a universal system of international security will take shape, primarily through enhancing the role and effectiveness of the United Nations;

— the colossal growth of the scientific and technological potential will be employed in a more civilised manner for the joint solution of global economic, ecological, energy, food, medical and other problems for the benefit of mankind as a whole;

— the diversified and voluntary intercourse of independent states and peoples will reliably serve their mutual enrichment, material and cultural, and will reinforce the structure of universal peace.

Are there any illusions here? Have the imperialist sources of aggression and war vanished? No. We do not forget about the threat to peace from imperialist militarism and consider that there are no guarantees as yet that the positive processes that have begun are irreversible. The new political thinking, in fact, enables us to see and find new opportunities for opposing policies of strength on a broader political basis than in the past. These opportunities are also reinforced by new objective factors that have arisen in the latter half of our century.

This also determines the development of our defence, whose effectiveness must henceforward be assured primarily by qualitative parameters—both in terms of technology and military science, and in terms of the composition of the armed forces. This must guarantee the Soviet state and its allies reliable security, and must be achieved in strict conformity with our defensive doctrine.

In our practical international activities we will continue to seek ways leading to a lasting peace and international cooperation. Relations with the socialist countries will continue to be in the forefront of our attention. We will consistently pursue the course of deepening our relations with developing states and with the non-aligned movement. We will conduct a vigorous dialogue and talks with statesmen in authority in their countries, above all in the principal domain of world politics, on disarmament matters. In the years of perestroika we have improved or initiated relations with a large number of states, neighbouring and distant. And we have worsened relations with none. We will endeavour to continue acting so.

The CPSU regards itself as an inalienable part of the world communist movement, which is at present conducting a difficult quest of the way forward to a new stage in its historical development. And we will—on the basis of absolutely equal rights and respect—take an active part in this quest. There is a growing international potential in our new relations with numerous civic forces representing world science and culture, with political parties of a different ideological orientation, above all with Socialists, Social-Democrats, Labour Party members, and other Left circles and movements. Our solidarity with the working people of the whole world, with the fighters against colonialism, racism, and reaction is unchanging.

Comrades, Soviet foreign policy, notwithstanding certain errors and miscalculations in the past, has on the whole a great deal to its credit as regards the country, socialism, and the whole of humanity. Perestroika has required a new quality of it, both in substance and in form. Just as domestic policy, it must in practice absorb the collective thinking of the Party and the people, and promptly take into account not only ongoing but predictable changes. Objective processes in the world and our capabilities must become the subject of constant scholarly and general discussions involving the public and its organisations. The quality of information on international affairs must be drastically improved. Within the framework of the reform of the political system there has to be established an effective constitutionally-authorised mechanism for a businesslike and competent discussion of international issues.

II. REFORM OF THE POLITICAL SYSTEM: PRINCIPAL GUARANTEE OF IRREVERSIBILITY OF PERESTROIKA

Comrades, in submitting a programme for the radical democratisation of socio-political life and a reform of the political system to the 19th All-Union Party Conference, the CPSU Central Committee believes that this will enable us to make our political institutions much more effective and tap the potential of socialist government by the people.

1. Why a Reform of the Political System Is Necessary

We are beginning this work not on unbroken ground, not from scratch. We have behind us the unique experience of the world's first socialist democracy. The forms and methods of government by the people engendered by socialism have had a profound influence on the social progress of mankind and have become part of the contemporary political culture. It was in our country that government by the working people was born, embodied in a Republic of Soviets, as well as workers' control, the right to work, and other major social rights of the individual, and the equal rights of men and women, nations and nationalities. In other words, we pioneered many of the democratic beginnings of the 20th century.

Why, then, is the task of radically reforming the political system being put forward today? First and foremost, comrades, it is a fact—and we have to admit this today—that at a certain stage the political system established as a result of the October Revolution underwent serious deformations. This made possible the omnipotence of Stalin and his entourage, and the wave of repressive measures and lawlessness. The command methods of administration that arose in those years had a dire effect on various aspects of the development of our society. Rooted in that system are many of the difficulties that we experience to this day.

The decisions of the 20th Party Congress opened up possibilities of overcoming the violations of Leninist principles in the life of the Party and the state. However, these possibilities were not utilised primarily because the importance of socialist democracy was underestimated and belittled. And this led to relapses of cult-related phenomena.

The existing political system proved incapable of protecting us from the growth of stagnation phenomena in economic and social life in the latter decades, and doomed the reforms undertaken at the time to failure. While functions of economic management became increasingly concentrated in the hands of the Party-political leadership, the role of the executive apparatus at the same time increased out of all proportion. The number of people elected to various governmental and non-governmental bodies reached one third of the country's adult population, but at the same time most of them were removed from real participation in handling state and public affairs.

In the period of stagnation the machinery of management, which had grown to almost a hundred national ministries and government agencies, and eight hundred in the republics, began practically to dictate its will in both the economic and the political field. It was these agencies and other administrative structures that handled the execution of the decisions taken, and that by their action or inaction determined what would be and what would not be. The Soviets—and, in many respects, the Party bodies as well—proved unable to control this pressure from departmental interests. It became a universal rule that the body taking the decisions bore no economic responsibility for the implications of its actions.

Another serious shortcoming of the political system that had taken shape was the excessive governmentalisation of public life. To be sure, the tasks and functions of the state under socialism are much bigger in scope than under capitalism. But, as conceived by the founders of Marxist-Leninist theory, management functions should be expanded not by strengthening power resting upon high-handed administration and compulsion, but above all by increasing the role of the democratic factor and involving broad sections of the people in administration.

Let us recall Lenin's well-known definition of the socialist state as one "which is *no longer* a state in the proper sense of the term" or even a "half-state", which gradually develops into social self-government. Unfortunately, after Lenin's death, the prevailing approach to the state in theory—and, for that matter, in practice too—became one of treating the state in the "full", old meaning of the term. State regulation was extended to an inordinately broad sphere of public activities. The tendency to encompass every sphere of life with detailed centralised planning and control literally straitjacketed society and became a serious brake on the initiative of people, public organisations, and collectives. This gave rise, among other things, to a "shadow" economy and culture, which thrive on the inability of state bodies to provide timely and adequate satisfaction of the population's material and cultural requirements.

With state structures bureaucratised and the people's social creativity impaired, society became accustomed to single-option and static thinking. A simplified, stunted image of socialist government by the people arose and still persists in influencing people's thinking, with the actual administration of power being identified not with the people's political activity, but, above all, with the executive agencies.

Finally, the existing political system for decades adapted not to organising social life within the framework of the law, but mainly to executing voluntaristic directives and instructions. Such phenomena as the proclamation of democratic principles in word and authoritarian action in deed, as platform exhortations about government by the people and voluntarism and subjectivism in practice, as endless talk about democratic institutions and the actual trampling underfoot of the standards of the socialist way of life, and a shortage of criticism and glasnost became fairly widespread and took firm root in the life of society.

The price paid for such methods was a heavy one: indifference, a reduction in the people's social activity, and the alienation of the working man from public ownership and management. It is this ossified system of government, with its command-and-pressure mechanism, that is the cause of the fundamental problems of perestroika: the economic reform, the development of the socio-cultural sphere, and the inculcation in people of a proprietary interest in everything that goes on in the country.

In the spring of 1985, the Party began a resolute struggle for a renewal of socio-political structures. A new economic mechanism is gradually being whipped into shape. The character of social relations is changing. The legal basis of perestroika is being consolidated. We are learning democracy and glasnost, learning to argue and conduct a debate, to tell one another the truth. These are certainly not small things.

But the processes of democratisation—centrally and locally—are developing slowly. Today we must have the courage to admit that if the political system remains immobile and unchanged, we will not cope with the tasks of perestroika.

In raising the question of cardinally reforming the political system, we must proceed above all from a clear understanding of which of its qualities have stood the test of time and are needed by us today, and which, on the contrary, have to be reduced to a minimum or overcome completely.

This, it seems to us, should imply the accomplishment of the following basic tasks:

First, everything must be done to include millions upon millions of people in administering the country in deed, not in word.

Second, the maximum scope must be given to the processes of the self-regulation and self-government of society, and the conditions must be created for the full development of the initiative of citizens, representative bodies of government, Party and public organisations, and work collectives.

Third, it is necessary to adjust the mechanism of the unhindered formation and expression of the interests and will of all classes and social groups, their coordination and realisation in the domestic and foreign policies of the Soviet state.

Fourth, the conditions must be created for the further free development of every nation and nationality, for the strengthening of their friendship and equitable cooperation on the principles of internationalism.

Fifth, socialist legality, law and order, must be radically strengthened so as to rule out any possibility of power being usurped or abused, so as effectively to counter bureaucracy and formalism, and reliably guarantee the protection of citizens' constitutional rights and freedoms, and also the execution of their duties with respect to society and the state.

Sixth, there must be a strict demarcation of the functions of Party and state bodies in conformity with Lenin's conception of the Communist Party as a political vanguard of society and the role of the Soviet state as an instrument of government by the people.

Finally, seventh, an effective mechanism must be established to assure the timely self-rejuvenation of the political system with due consideration for changing internal and external conditions, a system capable of increasingly vigorous development and of introducing the principles of socialist democracy and self-government into all spheres of life.

2. Perestroika and Human Rights

The ultimate goal of the reform of the political system and the main yardstick of how effectively we manage to carry it out are the all-round enrichment of human rights and people's greater social activity. This is central to the theory and practice of socialism. An impressive edifice of the citizen's guaranteed rights in many fields has been erected on the foundation laid by the October Revolution in our country. We exercise those rights and, to tell the truth, we seldom pause to think that all these rights, to which we are so accustomed, are in many parts of the world still but a hope for the working people, a set of goals in their struggle.

Human rights in our society are not a gift from the state or a boon from someone. They are an inalienable characteristic of socialism, its achievement. The individual and society, the citizen and the state, a person and the collective are all different aspects of one and the same problem. How it is solved reflects the nature of a political system and goes a long way towards shaping the results of people's activities and the entire mode of social life. The socialist solution of this problem consists in closely integrating the collectivist and the personal principle. Our philosophy in this key aspect of the organisation of society follows from the famous formula in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party:* "The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." It is important for us to understand, comrades, that it is a person's standing in society, the rights conferred upon him and his duties that ultimately determine his activity in society, at work, and in political affairs. Moreover, we must not just understand this, but act in this direction in carrying out the economic reform and the reform of the political system.

What are the specific tasks in this area?

First of all, concerning the social rights of the individual. We have built up a ramified system whereby society cares for a person, but at the present stage of development we see its weaknesses and failings, and we are trying to do everything possible to improve working conditions, upgrade the quality of public education and the health service, and raise the standards of social security. All this reflects the Party's firm commitment to assuring the people equal rights and social protection.

But here is what must be said in this context. We want to reinforce the guarantees of the individual's socio-economic rights, and this requires corresponding changes in economic and political conditions. But the character of these changes and the time needed to effect them are closely linked to the work of all members of Soviet society. Social benefits received from society and the attitude to work are bound up indissolubly. It is important that every person should understand the need for an exacting attitude to oneself. Here again we see the importance of the khozraschot principles of running the economy, which make it possible to link not only earnings, but also the satisfaction of social requirements, with the work contribution of a person, of every collective. Values and benefits do not arise of their own accord. They are created only by work. We cannot accept a slipshod attitude on the job, poor discipline at work, inertness, and sponging on society.

Yes, we know that in the years of stagnation plenty of difficult problems piled up in the sphere of work. Now we have to set matters right and make up for lost time. And this is not so simple, since it concerns the whole of society.

Perestroika has brought the question of people's political rights into focus. Their implementation was affected particularly painfully by the command methods of administration and associated restriction of democracy. All this retarded and inhibited the process of overcoming the people's alienation from government and from politics, a process that began with the October Revolution.

The draft political reform that is being submitted to our Conference for discussion is aimed precisely at speeding the process of the broad involvement of the people in running the country's affairs. This, naturally, requires the establishment of realistic conditions: a modification of the electoral system, a structural reorganisation of the bodies of authority and management, and an overhaul of legislation. This, of course, also presupposes corresponding changes in the consciousness of millions upon millions of people.

Just now it is often being said and written by people in various localities that perestroika has not reached them; they ask when this will happen. But perestroika is not manna from the skies—instead of waiting for it to be brought in from somewhere, it has to be brought about by the people themselves in their town or village, in their work collective. What is needed today more than ever are deeds, actions, not talk about perestroika. Much here depends on our personnel, on leaders at the district, town, regional, republican and Union level.

But it is not leaders alone who are to blame for the fact that we still have plenty of places where perestroika is riding at anchor. Pointing an accusing finger at the people in charge is known to be the easiest thing to do and it is a very widespread thing with us. This habit could be somehow understood when the social atmosphere in the country, and the activities of Party and state bodies, were not creating the proper groundwork for people to take an active civic stand. But now, comrades, everything is changing radically, and many people have joined energetically in all the processes of perestroika. Therefore, we must put a blunt question to people who persist in complaining and pointing a finger at those in charge, at the "higher-ups": what have you yourself done for perestroika?

I would like to dwell particularly on the political freedoms that enable a person to express his opinion on any matter. The implementation of these freedoms is a real guarantee that any problem of public interest will be discussed from every angle, and all the pros and cons will be weighed, and that this will help to find optimal solutions with due consideration for all the diverse opinions and actual possibilities. In short, comrades, what we are talking about is a new role of public opinion in the country. And there is no need to fear the novel, unconventional character of some opinions, there is no need to overreact and lapse into extremes at every turn of the debates.

I also want to touch upon such a fundamental matter as freedom of conscience, which is very much in the public eye just now in connection with the millennium of the introduction of Christianity in Russia. We do not conceal our attitude to the religious outlook as being non-materialistic and unscientific. But this is no reason for a disrespectful attitude to the spiritual-mindedness of the believer, let alone for applying any administrative pressure to assert materialistic views.

Lenin's decree on the separation of the church from the state and schools from the church, adopted seventy years ago, provided a new basis for the relations between them. It is known that these relations have not always developed normally. But the course of events, history united believers and non-believers as Soviet citizens and patriots in the years of the ordeal of the Great Patriotic War, in building up our socialist society, and in the struggle for peace.

All believers, irrespective of the religion they profess, are full-fledged citizens of the USSR. The overwhelming majority of them take an active part in our industrial and public life, in solving the problems of perestroika. The law on freedom of conscience now being drafted is based on Lenin's principles and takes into consideration all the realities of the present day.

Now about the personal rights of citizens. Here, too, there is a need for more precise legislative regulation. Something has already been accomplished. There was deep satisfaction at the decision not to consider unsigned poison-pen letters, at the establishment of criminal liability for victimising people for criticism, at the procedure for taking officials to court for illegal actions and compensation for damages caused by such actions, and at measures providing greater protection of the rights of the mentally ill. Our entire legal system is designed to guarantee strict observance of the rights of citizens to the inviolability of their private life, home, the secrecy of telephone communication, postal and telegraph correspondence. The law must reliably protect a person's dignity.

But while in every way protecting and guaranteeing people's rights and freedoms, we cannot divorce them from civic duties. Democracy presupposes a rational social order, without which, actually, there can be no personal freedom. Our legislation has the purpose of firmly protecting society from all kinds of money-grubbers, scroungers, pilferers, hooligans, slanderers, and boors. Society must have at its disposal effective means of influencing anti-social elements, re-educating and returning them to a normal working life.

One more problem. The assertion of personal rights and freedoms, and the expansion of democracy and glasnost in general, must proceed hand-in-hand with the reinforcement of legality and the inculcation of an absolute respect for the law. Democracy is incompatible either with wantonness, or with irresponsibility, or with permissiveness.

As you know, we have lately more than once encountered attempts to use democratic rights for undemocratic purposes. There are some who think that in this way any problems can be solved—from redrawing boundaries to setting up opposition parties. The CPSU Central Committee considers that such abuses of democratisation are fundamentally at variance with the aims of perestroika and run counter to the people's interests.

The problem of human rights also has an important international aspect. We are deeply convinced of the correctness of our socialist choice and, while eliminating all distortions and deformations, firmly intend to enrich the rights of the individual on a precisely socialist footing by acting within a framework and by methods that are in keeping with the nature of our system. But in contemporary conditions human rights, and, above all, the right to life become the concern of the entire world community; they are internationalised, like many other aspects of social life.

We are prepared to cooperate actively with all other countries, to compare notes and scrupulously honour our commitments.

We are convinced that perestroika will make it possible to demonstrate the absolute advantages of socialism in assuring all human rights, social, political, and individual.

3. Perfecting the Organisation of Government

Comrades, we all know that our state was born as a tool of a working-class dictatorship; at the turn of the 1960s the conclusion was made that it was gradually evolving into a state of the whole people. But the deeper we delve into the content of the political process, the more obvious it becomes that our state must be made a people's state in the full sense of the term. This means we should organise state power and government so that the people would always have the final say and the processes of self-regulation and self-government would be given the widest possible scope. Of fundamental importance here is the proper distribution of authority, of powers between the principal elements of our political system, first and foremost between the Party and the state.

We are facing the pressing task of restoring the full authority of the Soviets of People's Deputies, and half-measures just won't do. We've got to tackle the problem in an integral way and devise a cardinal solution.

The discussion held before the Conference has shown that the measures suggested by the Central Committee for restructuring the Soviets have won support and approval. The underlying principle can be formulated as follows: not a single question concerning the state, the economy or the social fabric can be decided if the Soviets are bypassed. The Party's economic, social and ethnic policy should be carried out above all via the Soviets of People's Deputies as the organs of popular government.

The need has fully matured to reorganise the management of local affairs along the lines of self-government, self-financing and self-sufficiency.

This reorganisation is to follow up logically on our economic reform, correlate and combine the interests of all society with the requirements of each of its territorial units and each work collective, and put an end to the departmental isolation and fragmentation of local economic structures. We should assert the full and independent authority of the Soviets in managing the development of the areas they run, and economic enterprises, no matter what their superior agency, should contribute a bigger share of their profits to the budget of the Soviets.

The Soviets should have adequate sources of income based on long-term quotas; this income should include revenue received from all economic enterprises on the territory under their jurisdiction. The Soviets should accumulate funds for tackling large-scale projects. They should also have the necessary opportunities for inviting contributions from citizens so as to deal with issues common to the people of a city, district or township and concerning social or cultural development or improved consumer services.

Efforts should be stepped up to transfer to the local Soviets the authority over those enterprises whose products help meet local consumer demand; local Soviets should be able to place orders with enterprises run by superior agencies too. Our legislation should be clear and unambiguous about the Soviets' relations with enterprises, collective farms and their work collectives.

The task is to resolutely reorganise the work of representative bodies, to expand the scope of the questions decided solely at their sessions. Provisions should be made to periodically relieve part of the deputies from their regular office or shop floor duties so as to enable them to work in the Soviets and in the constituencies. The monitoring functions of the Soviets and their standing commissions should be made more effective. At sessions dealing with the elections of the executive committee and with the appointment of desk or department chiefs, alternative nominations, voting by secret ballot, competition and other democratic practices should be the rule. We must ensure a situation where Soviets at all levels would work in the open, in full view of the electorate.

Lenin saw the Soviets as combining legislative, administrative and monitoring functions. But this does not rule out a rational division of functions between government bodies—something which is particularly important for the Soviets' relations with their executive committees. Many participants in the discussion have suggested that, in order to divide these functions properly and enhance the powers of the representative bodies to control the activities of the executive committees, local government bodies should have standing chairmen of Soviets and presidiums of Soviets. They would prepare sessions, coordinate the work of the standing commissions and of deputies' groups and, generally, organise and intensify the work of representative government bodies.

Since enhancing the role of the elected bodies and of their deputies is the order of the day, one can describe as justified the view of those comrades who hold that, given the new tasks that have arisen, it is very important to back the role of the Soviets as the people's representative bodies with the prestige of the Party. But that should be done on a strictly legal basis.

Here, the most practicable way would be to nominate, as a rule, first secretaries of Party committees to serve as chairmen of the respective Soviets. Placed at the head of Soviets and their presidiums, they will be very active in helping improve all aspects of the work performed by the popular representative bodies.

That is a very important question, and it should be considered in greater detail. The current practice is to have first secretaries usually serve on executive committees. The record of many years shows that, whether we want it or not, this increases the powers of the executive bodies and of their staff at the expense of the prestige of the Soviets as representative bodies.

If the first secretary of a Party committee is elected chairman of the respective Soviet, this will raise the Soviet's prestige, increase the accountability of the executive committee and its chairman and make it possible to divide the functions of Party and government bodies with greater precision now that the onus of government is shifting onto the Soviets.

On the other hand, comrades, the nomination of Party leaders to chair Soviets will make them more effectively answerable to the working people because the elections at the sessions will be conducted by secret ballot. This means that the mandate received by a Party leader from Communists will be verified and confirmed by representatives of the people each time, at all levels of the system of Soviets. Naturally, the nomination of a Party secretary may not always be supported by the deputies. If that is the case, the Party committee and the Communists will obviously have to draw the necessary conclusions.

A better division of powers between representative and executive bodies should be furthered by the adoption of a rule barring members of an executive committee and the chiefs of its desks and departments from serving as deputies of the respective Soviet. As things stand, being deputies, they participate in the sessions of the Soviet and give assignments to themselves. So they are clearly interested in getting easier and lighter assignments. It would also be useful to apply this principle to judges, procurators, arbitrators and, at the level of the USSR and of Union and Autonomous republics, to heads of ministries and chiefs of government agencies.

It is also time we introduced a number of democratic restrictions on the duration of service in elective offices. Our past record shows that the absence of these restrictions was a prime cause of abuses of power both centrally and locally. We have witnessed many respectable and able leaders exhaust their potential after serving in the same office for decades, and become a dead weight, a liability while still occupying a high-level position.

During the discussion conducted prior to the Conference, the entire Party and the entire people demanded that this situation be changed—although different views were expressed. Some doubted whether the reservation about a third consecutive term in an elective office was justified even as an exception. Others maintained that a third term should be an extension possible only in the highest echelon of power. Let us discuss these proposals.

One more point. The reference in the Theses was only to elective offices. But many participants in the discussion suggested that it be extended to cover the posts whose holders were to be appointed and endorsed by the Soviets. We believe that this is a valid proposal which deserves to be supported.

The discussion also dealt with the proposal that service in an elective office be restricted by a certain age limit. To this, objections were raised by those who maintained that this would infringe on the sovereign rights of the electorate. One would venture to say that, given a broad democratisation of the entire practice of forming government and management bodies, this problem is likely to lose its acuteness and to be tackled by the voters and deputies themselves through democratic procedures.

Tangible political weight carried by the people's deputy is essential to enhancing the activity of the Soviets, and this is something which is linked directly with the entire process of forming representative government bodies. Hence the need for a resolute renewal of our election system.

We have already embarked upon this path in acting on the decisions of the 27th Party Congress. In some of the constituencies, the latest elections were conducted with several candidates vying for the same seat, and in many districts there were two or more nominations to the same office. Nationwide, the number of the candidacies considered was almost double that of the available seats. Competitiveness made the elections more lively, the voters more interested and the deputies more conscious of their responsibilities. We must now go further, mastering and consolidating the new approaches to our system of elections.

The process by which the Soviets are formed should ensure the right to nominate an unlimited number of candidates and to discuss them broadly and freely. There must also be strict compliance with the democratic procedure of elections, regular reports by the deputies to their constituencies, and the opportunity to recall deputies. More extensive powers should be granted to district election meetings which are to become democratic forums for a competitive selection of candidates.

Generally, comrades, the body of deputies should from now on be formed above all through a lively and free expression of the will of the electorate, not according to quotas sent down from above. The Soviets' efficiency depends first and foremost on the practice of electing principled, vigorous and experienced deputies who can think as statesmen should, effectively represent their constituencies and work energetically on government bodies.

We should not be afraid of non-proportional representation of different social strata. We have militant, politically competent and vigorous people in every section of our population—among the working class, the peasants and the intelligentsia. The important thing is to create a smoothly functioning mechanism of competition enabling the voters to select such people as effectively as possible. Then, all major population groups and their interests will be reflected in the composition of the Soviets. As far as we understand, there is a public consensus on reducing the size of Soviets at the local level.

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As the Central Committee's Theses for the Conference were being discussed, widespread support was expressed for the proposal on introducing a single five-year term of office for all Soviets. This will enable the deputies of local Soviets to work with more confidence and to have enough time for translating their projects into reality. Meanwhile, the voters will retain their right to recall a lazy or incompetent deputy or, should this become necessary, to send new deputies to the Soviet.

The structure and the powers of the supreme bodies of Soviet government are a matter of decisive importance for the efficient work of the Soviets. All of us can see that, for all the useful work performed by the deputies, the Presidium and the commissions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, substantial changes are in order in the structure and procedures of our highest government body. Particular interest in this matter was displayed during the discussion of the Central Committee's Theses.

Many suggested that we turn to the record of the first post-revolutionary decades with their system of Congresses of Soviets. Those were broad and plenipotentiary people's assemblies, and in between the necessary work was performed by the central executive committees which enjoyed sufficiently extensive powers. Mass representation was combined with constant legislative, administrative and supervisory work. In the course of the discussion it was also suggested that our public organisations be directly represented on our country's supreme government body.

Summing up these views, the CPSU Central Committee is submitting the following proposals for consideration by the Conference.

First, that representation of the working people in the top echelon of government be extended considerably.

With this end in view, direct representation of the public organisations incorporated into our political system should be added to the currently existing territorial representation of the entire population on the Soviet of the Union and the representation of our nations and nationalities on the Soviet of Nationalities. Thus 1,500 deputies would be elected, as they are now, from the territorial and national districts, and approximately another 750 deputies would be elected at the congresses or at plenary sessions of the governing bodies of Party, trade union, cooperative, youth, women's, veterans', scientific, writers', artists', and other organisations. The list of these organisations and the quotas of their representation could be incorporated into the Constitution.

All these deputies, elected for a five-year term, would comprise a new representative supreme government body—the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR. It would be convened annually to decide on the country's more important constitutional, political and socio-economic issues.

The Congress of People's Deputies would elect from among its members a relatively small (say, 400- to 450-strong) bicameral USSR Supreme Soviet which would consider and decide all legislative and administrative questions and those of control and direct the activities of the bodies accountable to it and of the lower-level Soviets. It would be a standing supreme government body reporting to the Congress of People's Deputies. In this way, all legislative and monitoring work would be concentrated directly within the Supreme Soviet and its commissions. That would be a new step forward in the democratisation of the highest structures of government. We can also consider a periodic renewal of part of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Second, the work of the chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet should be stepped up and their current functional anonymity ended.

Naturally, draft legislation and other matters of key importance to the country should, as before, be considered and decided by the members of both chambers of the Supreme Soviet.

At the same time, the Soviet of Nationalities which represents all of the country's national-state and national-administrative entities could consider issues of their economic and social development, interethnic relations, observance of relevant legislation, supervising the activities performed by USSR ministries and agencies and affecting the interests of republics or autonomous entities, etc.

For its part, the Soviet of the Union, which represents the interests of all the people, of all classes and social groups, could focus on the drafting of major socio-economic programmes and plans and on policy issues concerning prices, taxation, labour relations, protection of civil rights, the strengthening of national defence, the ratification of international treaties and the like.

Here at this Conference we should agree in general terms on the division of the chambers' functions. All this should be specified in the USSR Constitution and other legislative instruments.

The discussion highlighted another subject that was debated vigorously—the relationship between the top Party and government posts and their place within the structure of supreme authority. In this connection some believe it would be proper to return to the practice which existed in Lenin's time, when the leader of the Party was simultaneously the head of government. Others object to any combination of Party and government posts. Still others call for the establishment of the post of President of the USSR. There is also a body of opinion which points out that the situation where the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee in fact acts as the country's top official runs counter to the rule-of-law concept. Many other views are expressed too.

That, comrades, is a serious question, and our Conference should discuss it thoroughly so that the best possible solution to it could be found in the course of the reform of our political system.

In the opinion of the CPSU Central Committee, establishing the post of President of the USSR Supreme Soviet would be in line with enhancing the role played by the supreme representative bodies and by the entire system of the Soviets of People's Deputies, strengthening the rule-of-law basis of government and improving the representation of the Soviet Union in world affairs. It should be ruled that the President of the USSR Supreme Soviet shall be elected and recalled by secret ballot by, and be fully answerable and accountable to, the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR. Given the overall strengthening of the role played by representative bodies, the President of the USSR Supreme Soviet should be granted sufficiently broad state authority powers. Specifically, the President could exercise overall guidance in the drafting of legislation and of major socio-economic programmes, decide on the key issues of foreign policy, defence and national security, chair the Defence Council, submit proposals on nominating the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and discharge several other duties traditionally connected with the Presidency.

We also believe that the government structure at top level should comprise a Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet which would be guided in its work by the President of the Supreme Soviet. Serving on the Presidium could be two First Vice-Presidents (one being the Chairman of the USSR People's Control Committee), fifteen Vice-Presidents (one from each Union republic), and the chairmen of the chambers, standing commissions and committees of the Supreme Soviet. The Presidium would convene sessions, coordinate the work of the commissions and deputies of the Supreme Soviet, and discharge certain representative and other functions.

It would be useful to enhance the status of the standing commissions established by the supreme government body and comprising members of the Supreme Soviet and of the Congress of People's Deputies. These bodies could be established by the chambers both separately and jointly (joint committees).

In view of their new tasks, the commissions and committees should be granted much broader powers. Specifically, a provision could be adopted stating that decisions on major issues of domestic and foreign policy and on the appointment of heads of ministries and departments and other officials could be taken only after a preliminary discussion of these matters in the commissions and committees. It would be advisable to expand the practice of open hearings in the commissions and committees and to set up special groups of deputies to study questions of acute public interest.

There is also the issue of establishing, within the structure of supreme authority, a Constitutional Review Committee to be elected by the Congress of the People's Deputies of the USSR. It would verify the constitutionality of our legislation and other legal instruments and have sufficient powers to do it. Incidentally, this committee would be an additional guarantee of democratic control over the activities of all officials, including those in top-level posts.

Third, the new forms of organisation of supreme authority do not by themselves guarantee its efficiency. This objective calls for a radical change in the very character and style of the work performed by the Supreme Soviet. Its sessions should do away with long-winded speeches, with statements in which the speaker reports on his own accomplishments, with excessive and formalistic organisational procedures. The sessions should become lively and demanding; they should compare different suggestions and discuss amendments, additions and objections. It would be worthwhile to designate dates on which the government would reply to questions from deputies and to expand the practice of deputies' inquiries.

We may, of course, fail to achieve full unanimity in decision-making on this or that issue. But that is perfectly normal under a democratic process. Generally, it is high time we learned to listen closely to what an opponent is saying and not to regard him with invariable prejudice. Socialist pluralism of views, debate, discussion and comparison of different standpoints are a way of choosing the best possible solutions.

In suggesting these changes to be introduced into the structure and organisation of work of the Soviet Union's supreme government body, the CPSU Central Committee believes that many of them are also applicable to the supreme government bodies of the republics. The suggested changes would help enhance the role and raise the prestige of these bodies and, generally, further broaden the rights of the Union republics. Besides, a unified structure and a common system of procedures for the democratic operation of Union and republican government bodies would ensure efficient and smooth operation of the entire system of the Soviets.

In view of the proposed changes, we should also consider questions relating to the formation, structure and functions of the Autonomous republics' government bodies.

If the delegates agree, all these proposals could be articulated in a special resolution of our Conference. One might say that we should not unduly delay the restructuring of the Soviets. Specifically, relevant legislation could be considered in the USSR Supreme Soviet as early as this autumn and then, after regular elections are held next spring, the all-Union government bodies could be reorganised.

While strengthening the Soviets as the basis of representative democracy, we should also create favourable conditions for the broadest possible development of direct democracy—on the shop floor, in neighbourhoods, at public meetings and assemblies and in the course of discussing major all-Union and local issues.

The record of the past few years has demonstrated the effectiveness of nationwide discussion concerning proposed decisions on key questions of concern to the entire country—on the status of state enterprises, on the cooperative movement, on the school reform, on the organisation of the health service, etc. We should resort much more often to a public vote at the village, district or city level, particularly in deciding those issues which are of direct concern to the people and on which there is no unanimity. If that is the case, let some of the problems be decided by a majority.

There is a vast potential waiting to be developed by promoting all forms of socialist popular self-government. We have already acquired a legal, political and, to a certain degree, psychological basis for tapping this potential on a large scale, particularly within work collectives. In comprehensively assessing our own record and the experience accumulated by our friends in the other socialist countries, we should again and again consider the questions connected with the advisability of a full or partial transfer of some of the functions of government bodies to various self-governed organisations. The important thing is for this transfer to be genuine, not to remain on paper.

With perestroika under way and as democracy and glasnost are being promoted, all of us can see our working people display initiative in many different fields. Frankly though, comrades, far from everything is simple here. Take the example of a work collective operating under khozraschot. It can function as a self-financing entity only if it is self-governed. But that also means a new approach to the relationship between the general meeting and the council of the collective, between the Party, trade union and YCL organisations and the management, and between all these organisations as a whole and the Soviets of People's Deputies. Our experience in this sphere may be modest, but it is growing day by day, and we should use it properly to promote the process of self-government.

Finally, a few words about control as another highly important form of socialist popular rule.

The idea of workers' control can be traced to the October Revolution, and we know that Lenin examined it thoroughly in his last works. He saw control on the part of the masses as an essential guarantee against subjective arbitrary action and handedness, for due consideration to be given to local interests, but always in harmony with the interests of all society. In other words, those who believe that the course towards decentralisation opens the door to self-serving communalism or regional egoism will be making a grave mistake.

The problem of rationally combining centralism with decentralisation also arises in connection with the laws we have adopted on the state enterprise (amalgamation), on the cooperative movement and on self-employment. The principles articulated in these instruments should be the starting point in defining the functions and the structure of administrative bodies. They can no longer issue orders to work collectives.

Generally, comrades, democratisation at the level of a khozraschot unit, a single work collective or a cooperative will not produce the desired result—and we were made to see that at the first phase of our reform—unless it is complemented with a democratisation of management at the level of ministries, territorial agencies and central economic departments.

This means that we must work steadily to simplify the structure of managerial units dealing with similar economic branches and spheres of activity and merge them, to reduce the number of ministries and departments and to eliminate redundant agencies with middleman functions.

Comrades, now that the extremely complex issues of perestroika, of democratising society and ensuring large-scale involvement of the people in government are being tackled, we cannot do without an apparatus of functionaries, and we must not look down upon them. We do need a managerial apparatus, but it must be different from what it is today.

We must work to shape an apparatus of a new type, based on highly professional standards, competently using the latest communication technology, democratically controlled by the people and capable of promoting economic and social progress. This apparatus should comprise people well-versed in the fundamentals of the science of management. Therefore, we need new, updated arrangements for the training and retraining of the necessary personnel.

Work to adjust the structure of management and administration has begun at all levels. Some central and republican ministries and departments and some local managerial agencies have been abolished. New general patterns of administration and management have been examined and approved. Under these patterns, the apparatus of Union-level departments is being reduced by 40 per cent; the similar staff in Union republics is being halved and that in Autonomous republics, territories and regions, cut by one third. As the economic reform is gaining ground, enterprises, too, have begun to eliminate redundant managerial jobs.

However, this process encounters painful snags and resistance. The working people are justly criticising the CPSU Central Committee and the government for the slow pace of this effort. Now that three years of perestroika have elapsed, we still have a cumbersome managerial apparatus, and a large part of its functionaries are doing all they can to retain their positions without regard for the interests of society. In these matters, we must of course be guided by the perfectly warranted demands of the people.

In asserting the need to upgrade radically the efficiency of our administrative and managerial system, we should deal with this system in its entirety. None of its elements can be allowed to remain unaffected by a restructuring based on democratic renewal. This point fully applies to the agencies performing foreign-policy and foreign-economic functions. The substantive changes that have been recently launched within them are a natural and logical process consonant with the spirit of the times. We should also support the purposeful efforts undertaken by the governing bodies of the Committee for State Security, the Defence Ministry and the General Staff to improve their work at the current stage of our society's development, at the stage of broadening democratic processes.

In other words, comrades, democratisation makes it urgently necessary to radically improve the administrative and managerial system by properly combining central and local authority, the functions of elective and executive bodies, and tangibly expanding the involvement of the working people in government. It follows that the issue is not confined to purely organisational reshuffles. This point is very important for adequately grasping the character of the job before us.

5. Promoting Interethnic Relations

Comrades, the union of our country's nations and nationalities which enjoy equal rights is one of the greatest accomplishments of socialism. Today this enables us to state with profound conviction that in the future, too, consistent implementation of Lenin's ethnic policy will be the only sound basis of our development.

Practice has borne out the idea underlying the organisation of our great Union: the pooling of efforts has made it possible for each of our nations and for our society as a whole to drastically accelerate their advancement and reach new heights of historical progress. For all the difficulties we have encountered, today we can state that this Union has stood the test of time. It continues to be the essential and decisive factor for the future advancement of all our peoples.

You know that the Central Committee plans to devote a special plenary meeting to the promotion of interethnic relations. But since this subject is extremely important and topical, we should discuss it right now, at this Conference. The important thing is to see the actual picture which includes both our obvious achievements and our obvious shortcomings, omissions and difficulties connected with the still unresolved specific socio-economic issues and with occasional failures to dovetail the interests of individual nations and of the Soviet Union as a whole.

We will have to work in earnest to further promote and optimise the economic, scientific and technological ties existing between our republics and to make fuller use of the advantages offered by the domestic division of labour, cooperation and scientifically sound regional policies. Glasnost means a great deal in this sphere. The working people should be fully aware of how their republic is developing and of the place it occupies within the structure of the Soviet economy. They should know how not only their neighbours but also all of our country's republics live and develop. One of the reasons why this is necessary is that sometimes the views voiced with regard to relations between republics are based on incomplete and even biased information.

It would be proper for our Party Conference to identify reliable principles of interethnic economic relations—justice, fraternal internationalist mutual assistance, and cooperation, that is, things that ensure general progress for the Soviet Union as a whole and improve the economic and social conditions of all our nations and other ethnic groups.

It is time for us to examine the rights of our Union republics and bring them into conformity with our radical economic reform. Apparently, it would be useful if, having honoured their obligations to the Union budget, they could build up the production of goods and services for their own needs through skilful and enterprising economic management. That would also be in line with the demands of social justice in the development of interethnic relations, and it would help our entire country to advance.

In recent years, democratisation and glasnost have put the spotlight on problems which were not always taken into due consideration—issues of language, culture, literature, art, historical heritage and environmental protection.

It is natural for the development of our multinational state to be accompanied by a growth of national self-awareness. That is a positive phenomenon, but since the new requirements arising in this connection were not always treated with the attention they deserved, some issues began to grow more complicated and acquire a nationalistic aspect in some cases, although in principle they could have been settled quietly, without providing a pretext for all sorts of speculations and emotional extremes.

We have recently seen for ourselves how tangled the problems of relations between nationalities can become. This means that we must do our utmost to cherish our peoples' brotherhood and friendship. There is simply no other way, no other rational alternative, comrades. He who argues to the contrary deceives both himself and others. Moreover, to try and set people of different nationalities against each other, to sow dissension and hostility between them is a grave offence against one's own people and socialist society, let alone against the law. Objectively, such moves hamper both democratisation and perestroika.

We should also consider the questions of interethnic relations within the context of the current stage in the development of our multinational Soviet state. We should sum up the experience we have gained, make use of everything that is valuable and identify what we should abandon. Frankly, many such things should be considered. First and foremost, we should assess the numerous regulating instruments concerning the interrelationship of the Union and the republics. We should verify how well they are suited to the current circumstances, tasks and requirements of our multinational society, to the level of our democratic development. This is likely to call for a more precise definition of the status, rights and duties of Union and Autonomous republics and other ethnic entities.

The same approach should also be applied to the following question. Our population is highly mobile, many people live outside their territorial ethnic entities, and some ethnic groups have no territorial autonomy. All these are the realities of our multinational state. Certain collisions may occur, and they can only be settled in one way—by ensuring, within the existing state structure of our Union, the greatest possible consideration of the interests of each nation and nationality and of the entire community of the Soviet Union's peoples. In our specific situation, any other approach is simply impossible, and any attempt at moving in a different direction would lead to disaster.

Take Kazakhstan for example. It is a vast republic with a vast potential for development, a truly multinational community whose achievements have been made possible by the cooperation of all our peoples. Its territory has been settled and developed jointly by Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians, Germans, Kirghiz, Tatars, Uzbeks, Turkmen and representatives of many other nations and ethnic groups who live and work there together. But no one questions the integrity of the Kazakh Republic. A more or less similar picture can also be seen in the other republics.

Internationalisation of the economy and of the entire social fabric is something we cannot steer clear of. And so, any obsession with national isolation can only lead to economic and cultural impoverishment. Our socialist attitude is different: we are working for any person of any nationality to be able to enjoy his or her rights fully and effectively in any part of our country and to secure his or her legitimate interests everywhere.

In advocating further consolidation of interethnic relations, we proceed from the premise that the development of the Soviet Union, the internationalist ties within it and the brotherhood of our peoples are vibrantly dynamic processes. Both republican and Union-level agencies should never lose sight of them. The problems related to them should be tackled in accordance with the will of our peoples, in the spirit of concord and in the interests of all Soviet people.

It is very important for our political system to comprise, on a permanent basis, such government and social institutions that would deal with all interethnic problems in their entirety. As I mentioned earlier, this should be a major function of the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

To sum up, comrades, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is our common home. It is our home, and we must take unflagging care of it, cherish and improve it, and work in such a way that all Soviet people who live in it can take pride in their socialist Motherland.

Apparently, this point should receive special emphasis in our Conference's resolution on improving interethnic relations.

6. Establishing a Socialist Rule-of-Law State

I believe I should specially note the interest generated by the section in the Central Committee's Theses in which it says that the consistent democratisation of Soviet society should complete the establishment of a socialist rule-of-law state. To put it briefly, the foremost salient feature of a state committed to rule of law is that it effectively ensures the primacy of law. Not a single government body, official, collective, Party organisation, public association or individual can be exempt from abiding by the law. Just as all citizens have obligations to our state of the whole people, the state has obligations to its citizens. Their rights must be firmly protected against any abuse by the authorities.

Perestroika has especially clearly revealed the conservatism of our legal system which is so far largely oriented not to democratic or economic but to command-style methods of administration and government with their numerous bans and petty regimentation. As a result, many legal instruments currently in force in fact hinder social development. Hence the need for a reform of Soviet legislation, a reform that is to cover a broad range of legal standards, primarily those dealing with socialist ownership, with planning and with economic, labour, fiscal, pension-associated and other relations. In renewing our legislation we should unswervingly observe the principle that everything not prohibited by law is allowed.

The activities of the courts are of immense importance. The future of many people, the protection of their rights and the inevitability of punishment for offences against the law depend on the accuracy of the scales of justice. Bearing all this in mind, it is extremely important to restore Lenin's vision of the role to be played by the courts of law within the system of our democracy. We should abide strictly by the principle that judges are to be independent and guided only by the law. The election of the courts by higher-level Soviets of People's Deputies for a longer term—say, of ten years—can become an effective guarantee of this principle.

The public demands stiffer punishment for cases of contempt of court or interference in its affairs, strict observance of the democratic principles of judicial proceedings such as the competitiveness and equality of the parties, glasnost, openness, the ruling out of prejudice, of bias against the defendant and absolutely no departures from the principle of "innocent until proven guilty".

The question is correctly being raised to enhance the role of the people's assessors. Specifically, the proposal on having more assessors present to consider more complicated cases deserves attention.

Thus, comrades, we are facing the need to effect a major reform of our courts.

Special mention should be made of the role and powers of the Procurator's Office. Over the past two decades, a great variety of additional duties has been imposed on it, inevitably pushing its functions of legality control to a place of secondary and even lesser importance. The CPSU Central Committee has recognised the need to have this distortion corrected, to return to the Leninist position and to assert control over the precise interpretation and application of Soviet laws everywhere as the prime function of the procurators.

Essential to improved crime control is the work that has begun to amend the criminal code and then the procedural and the correctional labour codes and to bring their rules into conformity with today's requirements of our society.

Great attention should be accorded to improving the work of the militia. Over the past two to three years, tens of thousands of Communists and YCL members—industrial workers and farmers—have joined it on recommendation of Party committees and work collectives. This will help improve the Interior Ministry bodies in which, as we are all aware, major mistakes and, unfortunately, abuses have been committed. Work with the personnel, its political and legal training and the raising of its professional level is our principal tool in the radical improvement of the militia's activities.

One should also support the proposal on the earliest transfer of most criminal cases under investigation to the investigation department of the Interior Ministry and on transforming it into an autonomous structure over which the local militia would have no control. Hopefully, this will make it possible to better use the potential of the Soviet militia in crime control and in the maintenance of law and order.

With a view to enhancing the protection of civil rights, we would be justified in raising the issue of enhancing the role of the Bar as a self-governing association and ensuring more active involvement of the members of the Bar in the trying of criminal and civil cases.

Since our economy is now switching to the principles of economic reform, the legal departments of Soviets, ministries, economic and other organisations should be reinforced substantially, as should state arbitration agencies. Under khozraschot and self-management, with contractual relations increasingly permeating all economic ties, reliable operation of the legal departments assumes paramount importance. Without this, one can hardly expect the great mass of legal and other questions arising in the course of perestroika to be settled properly.

The projected legal and court reform—the suggestion is to have its main avenues defined in a separate resolution of our Conference—is sure to require substantial personnel support. Therefore, we cannot do without a special programme for the training and retraining of legal experts. Simultaneously, the topical issue of salaries in the legal profession should also be settled.

The elimination of juridical illiteracy should begin at school and be continued at vocational training schools, colleges, universities, factories and offices. I think that greater material incentives and the very rules of khozraschot will do much to assist the masses in mastering the fundamentals of juridical knowledge and to help strengthen law and order in our country.

7. Public Organisations in the Political System

Public organisations, which speak for various sections of our society, are a major component of the Soviet political system. The trade unions, the Young Communist League, cooperative societies, and women's and other organisations have played an important role in the history of socialist construction. Today, too, they are seeking ways of stepping up their activity and so contributing more to the revolutionary renewal of society. But the restructuring of public organisations, different as they are, is a slow and painful process. The habit of working in the old way, looking for a go-ahead from Party and government bodies, is still strong among them.

The general atmosphere in the country and a number of new political decisions and legislative acts enable public organisations to contribute more of their creative potential to the process of perestroika. Incidentally, the next to be adopted are laws on the rights of the trade unions, on the youth, voluntary societies, local community bodies, and independent public associations. Good conditions have already been provided for refashioning the activity of public organisations in the new conditions.

But, of course, decisions and legislative acts are not all that matters here. The main thing is how the public organisations themselves understand their role and place at this stage. Evidently, we ought to discuss in detail at this Conference the problems involved in making public organisations more active. Now I should like to express a few considerations on this score.

I will begin with the trade unions. Naturally, respecting their independence, we should not give them cut-and-dried recipes telling them how they should remodel their work. This has already been spoken of at the 18th Trade Union Congress. The main thing for the trade unions today is to democratise their activities with due account of the new situation developing as the democratic renewal of society is going on, especially at the level of work collectives.

Good prospects open up today for handing over to public organisations some of the functions performed by government bodies. We have every reason to expect the trade unions to be active champions of self-government principles. Self-government by work collectives adds to the significance of such a trade union function as the defence of the democratic rights of working people. By more confident actions in favour of democracy the trade unions can have a greater influence on people's mode of thinking, helping them to overcome inertia, giving them more opportunity to run the affairs of the collective and society.

And, of course, the protection by the trade unions of the social and economic interests of working people, above all in labour protection, industrial safety and social insurance, and in providing conditions for their rest and recreation and everyday life, is not decreasing, but is acquiring an ever greater importance. So, the trade unions should find their proper place and be far more active in effecting the economic reform, for this is the only way we can improve appreciably the living conditions of the working class and all working people.

The role of the trade unions, just like the role played by other public organisations, will grow if they are directly represented in the supreme body of state power.

We see today how all generations of Soviet people rally round the ideas of perestroika. These ideas equally meet the interests of older people, those who carried the burden of the first decades of socialist development, defended the independence of the country in the Great Patriotic War, and were reconstructing it in the post-war years, and those who are just at the start of their conscious life, who are yet to lead our Motherland to a new stage of progress.

Each generation should have its say in our common history. We all take part in it, and we all make it. But it is the younger generation that is destined to tap in full measure the vast economic, scientific, technological and intellectual potential which has been accumulated over the years of Soviet power, to augment it and attain the great goals of perestroika. And we see that the younger generation is increasingly becoming not just a participant in the nationwide struggle but its shock force.

The political and labour potential of the Soviet youth is immense. But it can be given full scope and the energy of the young can be used for perestroika only after resolutely overcoming the serious shortcomings that were present in our work among them in the past decades, when many big words were said about them, while no practical measures were taken to prepare the young people for life and draw them into the political and economic activity of our society.

The CPSU Central Committee regards favourably the correct ideas on this question expressed by the YCL Central Committee and YCL organisations.

We believe that in the present conditions the CPSU and the state should have a well-thought-out and integral policy with regard to the youth. Simultaneously, legal, economic and political mechanisms should be provided for putting it into practice.

The purpose of this policy as a special area of activity by the Party, state bodies and all public organisations is to provide conditions and stimuli for the youth that would enable it to put to use in the best way its thinking and energy, to develop and use its creative potential for the benefit of socialism.

We should display full political confidence in the young people and communicate with them in a new way, so that the lecturing of "children" by their "fathers" should give way to dialogue. If we want to regain the young people's trust, we should learn to talk with them openly and honestly as equals, remembering that truth alone can help us. The more truth, the more trust.

We should teach the youth to be selfless in the struggle for attaining our ideals. But at the same time we should provide conditions for a joyful, attractive and full-blooded life. As I am speaking about all this, I want to make it plain that what I mean is not flirting with the youth, nor some new kind of tutelage and all-forgiveness. The youth itself rejects all this.

No, we should base our relations on principles of trust, comradeship, respect, mutual exactingness and active cooperation in solving the tasks of renovating our socialist society.

In this context the role played by the Young Communist League today is of immense importance. The YCL is a political organisation of the Soviet youth functioning under the leadership of the Party. Today, as before, the main thing in its activity is to prepare the youth for becoming communists, for pursuing actively the policy of the Communist Party.

We all wish the YCL to be a school of communist education for young people, a genuine school of democracy, an innovative organisation offering support to creative people full of initiative, where glasnost and openness in stating their positions and discussions would be combined with meeting the interests of young people in practical terms, and where they would be drawn actively into the drive for social and economic change. This means that the YCL should have a possibility to work without hindrance, without waiting for instructions from above, but using in full measure the energy and initiative of the young.

As for Party committees, they should respect and observe the YCL's independence as an organisation, its right to decide independently all questions related to its internal activities without exception and its right to participate in elaborating and effecting the policy of the Party, and they should defend the interests of the youth in Party, government, and economic bodies. Perestroika demands that the younger generation be better represented in the Soviets, in the trade unions and other public organisations, so that young people could master the art of administration and boldly take state and public affairs into their hands.

Comrades, a new generation, the generation of perestroika, is growing before our eyes. To prepare this new generation is an important task confronting our entire Party, the whole of our society. Evidently this question is so important that it should also be the object of a special debate in the near future at a Plenary Meeting of the Party's Central Committee.

Speaking about the problem of social interests, I should like to dwell on yet another question of state importance—the women's question. It has often been asserted that this question has been resolved in this country once and for all.

Indeed, we proclaimed equal rights for women and men, gave women equal access to nearly all trades and professions, fixed equal pay for equal work, and guaranteed other rights for women. This is all very well. But it has turned out that, apart from the undeniable gains, there still are daily cares largely preventing women from enjoying their rights fully. Inadequate living conditions, the shortage of child-care facilities, defects in the services and trade—all this affects women in the first place.

So, here, too, the residual principle applied in the social sphere made itself felt. But this situation could exist for years also because the women's opinions were not duly reckoned with. Women are not duly represented in governing bodies. And the women's movement as a whole, which gained momentum after the October Revolution, has gradually come to a standstill or has become formal.

Perestroika has put all these questions pointedly before us. A women's mass organisation has been set up, or revived, to be more precise. But this is only an organisational aspect, important as it is. We must work to change the situation essentially, so that the door should be open wide for them to governing bodies at all levels, and that questions directly concerning women's interests would not be solved without their participation and without their decisive judgement.

Yet another significant feature of perestroika is the rapid growth of public associations reflecting the diversity of social interests. Among these are the organisation of war and labour veterans, unions of research and engineering societies and theatre workers, the Soviet Cultural Foundation, the Children's Fund, various societies dealing with the protection of the environment and historical monuments, and the charity movement. On the whole, this is a remarkable display of people's initiative, which deserves every support.

Of course, we should not shut our eyes to the fact that in the mainstream of public enthusiasm there have emerged some groups whose interests are far from the goals of perestroika, from the interests of the people. But it is not they that determine the general atmosphere, and it is not about them that I am speaking now. I believe Party organisations and working people can tell genuine champions of the renewal of socialist society from those who are guided by goals alien to socialism.

Under the one-party system, which had historically originated and taken root in our country, we need a permanent mechanism of comparing views, of criticism and self-criticism in the Party and in society. This is a vital question in the conditions of growing democratisation. This is exactly how the essence of inner-Party democracy was understood by Lenin, who, while denouncing factionalism, was strongly opposed to victimising Party members for being dissentient. A permanent and constructive political dialogue, tactful discussion and the study of, and due account for, public opinion should be the ever-present features of our life.

Conditions for this are being provided today. In fact, a nationwide patriotic movement in support of the Party's course of perestroika is being formed in the country. It comprises all the forces coming out for improving the life of society—Communists, YCLers, non-Party people, believers, women, veterans, young people, and members of all the main public organisations. This movement reflects the deep-going processes in our present political and public life and adds to confidence in the success of perestroika. At meetings and rallies and in the press people have come up with various proposals on the future of this movement and on possible forms of its activity. Let us discuss this question, too.

III. DEMOCRATISATION OF THE LEADING ROLE AND INTERNAL ACTIVITY OF THE CPSU

Comrades, as we are carrying out perestroika, we again and again turn our thoughts to the Party, to its place and role in this revolutionary process.

It is significant that attention in our society is focused precisely on questions related to the Party's activity and its leading role. This is convincing proof that the people associate the course of perestroika and their hopes with the Party. Even problems concerning its purely internal activity have become the object of nationwide interest.

By suggesting a new course in April 1985, the CPSU proved again to be exactly the initiator of the programme goals of our society and the political force capable of leading the country along the path of renewal. It daringly laid bare the causes of the pre-crisis situation and stagnant phenomena and took upon itself the responsibility for that situation. It objectively reviewed its activity, methods of leadership, and deliberately drew public criticism upon itself.

The negative processes that took place in the past decades not only in society as a whole, but also within the Party, were subjected to critical scrutiny at the 27th Congress of the CPSU and especially at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee in January 1987. We had to give answers to questions of principle: why did the CPSU, which had been formed as a truly democratic organisation, of the working people's own flesh and blood, fail to block the deformation of socialism, the processes associated with the cult of Stalin's personality? Why then, having exposed and denounced the departures from the principles of Leninism, did it confine itself to superficial changes which made possible the grave phenomena of stagnation in the country's development?

The answer is above all in the fact that definite deformations had occurred in the Party itself, in its activities and its ties with the working people, which brought about the loss of many democratic Bolshevik traditions inherent in it, traditions founded through the efforts exerted by Lenin and his associates for many years.

The 27th Congress of the CPSU set the task of restructuring Party work cardinally and democratising inner-Party activities. The lessons of truth have given rise to the growth of self-awareness and self-purification in our ranks. Communists, Party organisations and the Party press began to show their worth more vigorously and raised and tackled problems with greater boldness.

The process of renewal is gaining momentum, though it does not proceed smoothly, coming up against difficulties on its way. But while stating really profound changes in the life of the Party, we would not be entirely sincere if we did not say that by far not all is well at present. Not all Party organisations are refashioning their work to meet the new demands. Some of the Party officials and even whole committees stick to conservative positions. Many still find it hard to master new methods of work and to act in the situation of openness and democracy.

That is the way it is. But I wish to tell the delegates at this Conference and the people at large the main thing: the tasks of perestroika cannot be accomplished without the guiding activity of the Party, without giving effect to its political course. Without all this perestroika will be doomed politically, ideologically and organisationally.

At this turning point the CPSU should fully perform its functions and accomplish its tasks as the leading force in society. But precisely the decisive significance of political leadership makes it necessary to thoroughly discuss the content of the Party's activity in the present conditions.

1. Democracy Within the Party Should Be Fully Revived

What is the main thing here? The principled stand of the CPSU Central Committee has been set forth in the Theses. I shall quote it to you: "Guided by the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the Party is called upon to work out a theory and strategy of social development, home and foreign policy, and the ideology of socialist rejuvenation. It must also carry out political and organisational work among the people and properly educate and place the personnel."

We have defined the functions of the CPSU as the political vanguard. But to perform these functions the Party should remodel its activity, the style, methods and forms of its work—from the grassroots level up to the Central Committee. Each Communist should really be a fighter for implementing its policy, for the interests of the people.

And it is important to see why, then, we are displeased with ourselves, and why we subject the state of affairs in our Party home to bitter criticism. What is the matter?

The matter is, in the first place, that the principle of democratic centralism, which underlies the structure and activity of the CPSU, was at a certain stage largely replaced by bureaucratic centralism. This occurred above all because the primary Party organisations and rank-and-file Communists lost to a great extent real opportunities to influence the content of the Party's activities. Lenin's demand that all Party bodies and their cadres should be under the constant control of the Party masses was seriously violated. Many negative phenomena in the Party had been caused also by the decrease in the role of elective bodies and excessive growth of the role played by the Party apparatus at all levels.

There is yet another thing that must be mentioned here. Our Party was built by Lenin as an organisation of like-minded members, and free discussion of all problems and joint actions once a decision has been made was a law in it. But when the command-style of administration got established, the atmosphere of Party comradeship was gradually giving way to relations based on orders and their execution, on the division of Party members into chiefs and subordinates, relations in which the principle of equality among Communists was flouted. Though it was recognised now and again that such a situation should not be tolerated, nothing changed.

The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee in October 1964, it will be recalled, was held, in fact, under the slogan of restoring Lenin's principles and norms of Party life. But the real processes took a different turn and in the years of stagnation they sometimes appeared to be badly deformed. The activity of the primary Party organisations and of the members of elective bodies was affected also when the cadre replacement process was held back, and whole generations of Communists could not really take part in the life of the Party. On the other hand, many of those who remained in leading posts for years got a false idea of being infallible and irreplaceable. Responsibility declined among a large part of elected persons and in the Party apparatus. They lost contact with the Party masses and working people, which often ended, as we know now, in their political and moral degradation. It is here that we find the causes behind the shameful facts of power abuse and moral degeneration exposed in the course of perestroika.

I mention these phenomena with bitterness. They harmed badly the activities of the Party and its organisations. We must never forget about this side of the matter. But there is another side, which is very important to us. All these years millions of Party members and thousands of Party officials honestly fulfilled their Party and civic duty in the conditions which were, objectively and subjectively, not easy. They carried the banner of the Revolution with dignity and did all they could for the advance of their country, for socialism. The same is true about many of our leading cadres, economic executives and experts, scientists and cultural workers.

Leninist traditions lived on deep within the Party. In spite of everything, it was precisely in the Party that the forces accumulated which proved capable of effecting another sharp turn in socio-economic policy and set out on the path of restructuring and renewal.

The April Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee spoke strongly in favour of democratising the CPSU, in favour of openness in its work and full restoration of the Leninist standards in Party life, above all in the activity of primary Party organisations and elective bodies.

The ideas on this score expressed in the Theses of the Central Committee evoked a lively debate not only within the Party, but in the whole of society. All Soviet people wish to see a truly dynamic political force in every Communist, in every primary organisation of the Party, and in its every committee. During the debate that preceded the Conference, the questions concerning the role of Party meetings and the activities of Party organisations and committees, of each Communist, were considered in a new way. This is only logical, since precisely the primary Party organisation is an inseparable part of each work collective and personifies the permanent presence of the Party in the life of society.

For that purpose the task now is to fully restore in the Party an atmosphere of fidelity to principle, openness, discussion, criticism and self-criticism, conscientious discipline, Party comradeship, unconditional personal responsibility, and efficiency. The current processes in primary Party organisations proceed in these directions, and it is the task of the Conference to give them resolute support and open up unlimited opportunities for them to go on.

There should be a new approach to the question of responsibility of each Communist for the state of affairs at the place where he works, for his personal contribution to perestroika, and for the activities of his collective. All this is important also because many people still complain that perestroika has not reached primary Party organisations. But let us see who is to blame for this.

The political line towards perestroika was charted and approved by the Congress. The main areas of work were determined in the decisions adopted at the plenary meetings of the Central Committee. Legislative acts related to various spheres of life were adopted. An atmosphere of openness has been created in the Party and in society, and initiative, independence and civic attitudes are encouraged there. Many Communists, YCLers and non-Party people are active, following the dictates of their conscience, in various areas of the struggle for socialist renewal. Meanwhile, others are waiting for something to happen. A deep-rooted habit of waiting for instructions is still there. But the instructions have been issued, comrades, and it does not befit a Communist to be shepherded around.

For this reason the question of reviewing the Party membership, which was raised in the Theses, has become so urgent. Now each of us is demanded to take real actions to accomplish the tasks of perestroika. Comrades, the vanguard role of the Communists should be proved by their actions today.

The Central Committee has spoken in favour of socio-political certification procedures for Communists, and we have felt that this proposal is, in principle, approved of.

However, apprehensions, too, have been expressed, apprehensions of two kinds, in fact. Some insist that such certification will be of no use, that the Party should be purged and relieved of the dead-wood. We in the Central Committee consider this approach incorrect in the conditions of perestroika and democratisation. I will tell you why. Many of those who only recently were regarded inactive and had lost contact with the Party organisation, who had been regarded as dead-wood, are now trying to find their place in life. Comrades in the Party should be treated with utmost respect. Not a single honest person should be left outside perestroika. So let us proceed from this. It would be the Leninist, Bolshevik way of doing it.

Others fear that certification may turn into reprisals, into squaring accounts with those who are active today but do not suit a group of persons pursuing egoistic ends.

I think that if this serious matter is approached accordingly, then both kinds of apprehension will be dispelled. By proposing the idea of the Party's self-purification we expect that certification would be conducted in keeping with the Party Rules, in the framework of a normal democratic process, at open Party meetings, and not by commissions of three or five persons, nor through discussion behind the scenes, nor by issuing testimonials which are not to be made public. The very process of certification should be a school of educating Communists, from which they would emerge closely united by the bonds of Party comradeship, by the common goals and tasks set by perestroika for all of us.

Another question, and a very significant one, concerns admission to the Party. We should not hesitate to get rid of all kinds of quotas and bureaucratic approaches to this question which is so vital to the Party. The main criterion of appraising the merits of a person applying for Party membership is his stance and the part he really plays in perestroika. This demand should concern all people—workers, peasants and intellectuals alike. We all know perfectly well that a man can be best judged about in a collective, which can see clearly who joins the Party because he acts according to his conscience, and who merely seeks benefits for himself.

It has been suggested that the best people should be recommended for Party membership by work collectives. Practice has confirmed that it is advisable to discuss applications for Party membership at meetings of working people beforehand. Naturally, the opinion of the collective should be carefully considered by Communists during admission to the CPSU.

Now about the elective bodies of the Party. Here we should change a good deal, and change it cardinally. First of all the prestige of elective bodies as full-fledged representatives of Communists should be restored. The secretaries, bureaux, and especially the Party apparatus should be under the control of an elective Party body. From now on there should never be a situation when members of a bureau or a Party apparatus would allow themselves a command style in relation to members of elective committees.

It is not less, and perhaps even more, important that Party committees should discuss major questions of principle associated with the exercise by the Party of its vanguard role in the new conditions and with its organising and political work among the masses. It is necessary to end resolutely the practice of overburdening the agendas of Party meetings with dozens of matters of minor importance. In preparing and discussing questions on the agenda even the slightest attempt at excessive organisation, glorification and idle talk should be ruled out. Openness, a critical approach and efficiency should reign in all elective bodies. This applies also to the activity of the Party apparatus which should have no unjustified secrecy in its work.

All this fully applies also to the activity of the CPSU Central Committee, which occupies a special place in the Party and in society. In the intervals between congresses it is there that all major questions of home and foreign policies are decided. It is of great significance to the entire Party and to the whole of our society how the Central Committee works, what questions it discusses, what decisions it takes, and how democratic the atmosphere is during its work.

We have already said at the January Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee what situation had existed at the Central Committee for a number of years. Without repeating what has already been mentioned, I will only say that many blunders could have been avoided, if pressing problems concerning the country's leadership had been solved thoroughly and in due time, and if the work of the Party's Central Committee had always been full-blooded and democratic.

Now, especially after the 27th Party Congress, the situation has started to change. I would put it this way: the Central Committee is being revived, gaining strength. Its plenary meetings now proceed in a different way. Nonetheless, we have to be cautious yet in our assessments and avoid exaggerations.

Problem number one is active work by the Central Committee members not only in their places of work, but also during the preparation, discussion and adoption of general Party decisions. When I say this, I mean also definite experience. It was the practice before the recently held plenary meetings to hold preliminary discussions with Central Committee members and secretaries of Party committees, to circulate documents related to the agenda, and so on. All this has made the Central Committee members themselves more active and improved the quality of the decisions taken. This is, by the way, a definite guarantee against mistakes in work, and the price of such mistakes is known to be very high.

We should also think about new ways of organising work in the intervals between plenary meetings and at the plenary meetings themselves. Perhaps commissions should be set up at the Central Committee, dealing with the main aspects of home and foreign policies, and Central Committee members would work regularly in these commissions. In that case the Party apparatus would occupy an appropriate place.

Probably the Central Committee members should participate more actively in the work of the Politbureau. I would not say that this is not being done, but, so far, their participation is considerably limited to members of the apparatus, departments and research establishments of the capital.

Reports and information by the Politbureau on its activities presented at the plenary meetings of the Central Committee should become regular practice.

In order that Party committees and elective bodies should operate in a full-fledged manner and be able to make use of everything set down in our Rules, the procedure of their formation should be resolutely revised. This is the key factor in the activity of any elective body, Party ones included. It is necessary for elections at all levels to be conducted in a democratic atmosphere, which ensures a broad discussion of candidates, competitiveness, and, as a result, the election of talented and worthy people, who are genuinely dedicated to our cause, enjoy unquestionable authority, and are capable of pursuing the policy of perestroika.

Evidently, we cannot achieve this by employing the old methods whereby the candidates for possible discussion and subsequent voting were, in effect, named by the secretary, at best with the participation of bureau members of the Party regional committee, city committee, district committee, etc.

This being so, comrades, the following consideration is being submitted to the Conference: while leaving it to the general meeting or the Conference delegates to have the final say, recognition must also be given to the right of lower-level organisations, simultaneously with electing delegates to a conference or congress, to make proposals on candidates to a higher-level Party body. The discussion showed that the majority strongly favour the proposal that Communists be entitled, in elections to all Party committees, including the CPSU Central Committee, to nominate more candidates than there are seats and to be guided, in doing so, not by the office a person holds, but by his stance on perestroika.

Had this been the procedure, the problems that cropped up in some cases in electing delegates to our Conference would not have arisen.

There is universal interest in the proposal to establish a uniform five-year term for all Party committees, to limit the holding of elected office in the CPSU to two successive terms, and to permit election for a third term only in exceptional cases. The interest in this is not accidental—it reflects the concern felt by both Communists and non-Party people about past violations associated with the prolonged holding of leading offices. In principle, as we see it, three viewpoints have been expressed on this. Some comrades support the proposal contained in the Theses. Others want the holding of elected office at all levels of the Party to be confined to two successive terms. And, finally, still others favour permitting the exceptional election for a third successive term only in the highest echelon. Well, comrades, let's put our heads together once again and take a decision.

2. Demarcating the Functions of Party and State Bodies

A factor of tremendous importance in the functioning of the Party as a political vanguard in present conditions is the correct solution of the problem of clearly demarcating the functions of Party and state bodies. The position of the CPSU Central Committee on this matter is set forth in the Theses and aroused lively discussion. This is understandable. The reform of our political system and the success of perestroika as a whole actually depend on the solution of this problem.

Why do I speak of this so definitely? Our society is at a crucial stage. Embarked as it is on a process of profound change, it is more than ever in need of dependable political and ideological guidelines. The framing of such guidelines, of a strategy of social development, and its translation into a policy can be accomplished only by a strong party which has an enormous theoretical and personnel potential, close links with the people, and is constantly verifying its experience and enriching it with the experience of the masses.

Lenin repeatedly pointed to the harmful nature of the notions that a governing party must directly administer, ignoring or replacing other organisations of working people. He insisted on the need "to delimit much more precisely the functions of the Party (and of its Central Committee) from those of Soviet government". He strongly criticised attempts to saddle the Party with the responsibility for solving every specific problem and censured the practice whereby "minor matters are dragged before the Political Bureau".

It must be said that the question of separating the functions of the Party and the state was raised more than once at different stages in the history of our society, with recognition being given to the abnormal character of the existing situation and the need to modify it in line with the Leninist principle.

Meanwhile, instead of improving, things kept deteriorating from year to year. As problems of economic development grew increasingly complicated, the Party became involved in efforts to tackle all kinds of managerial issues, and its apparatus expanded accordingly. The essence of the command-style administration system demanded that such practices were to be preserved and consolidated. Moreover, citing the record of certain periods of our history, some people claimed that this was the most effective method of tackling any development problems. This was the main argument behind the assertion that the Party's leading role was growing.

Comrades, I think you'll agree that the effort to delineate and divide functions should start in the higher echelons of the country's leadership. I have already discussed the need to enhance the role of the supreme bodies of government and administration. What does this imply for the Party, for its Central Committee and the Central Committee Politbureau? The implication is above all that the Central Committee and the Politbureau are to act as organs of political leadership. And, of course, we should work resolutely to prevent any substitution of the supreme bodies of government and administration. The functions of the USSR Supreme Soviet and the USSR Council of Ministers are theirs alone.

Let us consider what mechanism and what opportunities should the Central Committee and its Politbureau use to pursue, via Soviet government bodies, the political course drawn up by the Party and to implement the decisions adopted at Party congresses and Central Committee plenary meetings. In these matters, we should fully assert the Leninist principle under which the CPSU is to conduct its policies via the Communists working on government bodies and in all spheres of society. All Party organisations are to act in strict compliance with the USSR Constitution and Soviet laws. We should rule out the practice of Party committees adopting resolutions with direct instructions to government or economic agencies or public organisations.

The greater prominence of the elective bodies and the division of functions between Party and government bodies have elevated to the practical plane the question of introducing changes into the structure and composition of the Party apparatus. We will have to give up the present division of the CPSU Central Committee apparatus—and of the apparatus of lower-level Party bodies—by spheres of management, restructure its composition in line with the Party's current functions, and reduce its size.

I would like to dwell specially on the Party's district and city organisations. Their role has always been, and remains, very important. With due regard for the new demands, we should pay close attention to the shaping of their apparatus, so that it could better assist Party committees in discharging their direct political, organisational and educational responsibilities. District and city committees should be guided by what is of paramount importance—the principle that in all their work, they should invariably rely on the Party's primary organisations. But that means that they should move resolutely to change their style and methods of work.

It appears that, taking the discussion at the Conference and the emergence of our common position on this score into account, we could make an early start of creating a new structure of the Party apparatus.

Comrades, all these proposals are aimed at ensuring unflagging observance of the democratic principles of inner-Party affairs, and at enhancing the Party's militancy and ability to lead and direct the revolutionary renewal of Soviet society and to set the pace of perestroika.

In fact, the point is that the Party's capacity for controlling and critically analysing its activities depends above all on how fully its work is permeated with the principles of democratic centralism, collective and collegial practices and glasnost.

One more thing, comrades. We expect that by working in this way we will decisively defeat bureaucracy—a disease that has spread, much as we regret it, to a large section of Party bodies and Party functionaries; as a result, they lose touch with the working people and cease to take the interests and the concerns of the people to heart. Naturally, there is no such thing as solving all our problems at one go. We must work firmly and steadily to revive the Leninist principles in guiding the Party's affairs.

In this connection I should also like to say a few words about control and auditing inside the Party. As the discussion has shown support is extended to the proposal contained in the Central Committee Theses on having a single control and auditing body that would be elected by the Party Congress and that would control observance by Communists of the demands of Party discipline, the Rules of the CPSU and the financial and economic activity of Party organisations.

3. Revolutionary Perestroika for a New Image of Socialism

Comrades, the February 1988 Central Committee Plenary Meeting put the objective of renewing our ideology in the same line as the radical economic reform and the democratisation of Party life and society. This stressed the active role that the Party ascribes to ideological work in the drive for perestroika.

Departures from the principles of creative Marxism-Leninism have left painful scars. Ideology's theoretical standard dropped. Propaganda was often at odds with the realities of life. In substance, ideological work was directed to serving dogmatic notions about socialism. It was no longer critical of the surrounding realities, and thus furthered the elements of stagnation. Propaganda shied away from the vital problems of life, degenerated into hollow rhetoric and empty praise, and became a purely ritual affair. Loss of intellectual initiative, dogmatism, and the break between words and deeds, had the effect of diminishing the Party's ideological influence.

The past three years saw an activisation of the public consciousness. A straightforward critical discussion was under way about the state of affairs in all areas of our life. For the first time in very many years, in decades I should say, we looked at ourselves not only candidly and without prejudice, but also in connection with all aspects of our development.

Search of the truth rather than of advantages, is again given precedence. Daring objective research rather than time-serving fads has again gained value. An edifying conclusion was reached for all to abide by in future: there can be no full-blooded and diverse spiritual life, there can be no truly effective and militant ideological work, without the truth of life, without scientific truths, and artistic discoveries.

The Party is sure that this approach is right. It is sure of its revolutionary initiative in promoting glasnost, democracy, and a socialist plurality of opinion. But it would be naive to assume that a thoroughly renewed society will emerge overnight, of its own accord, through moral purification, substantiated criticism, and a break with the worthless past. No, the dialectic of consciousness and practice is immeasurably more complicated. The effectiveness of ideological activity depends to a decisive extent on the concrete political, organisational, social and economic conditions.

Today, we have managed to arouse the consciousness of society, to surmount the state of apathy and estrangement. Now the question is: where will this aroused consciousness go, and what direction will public opinion take?

It will either serve the cause of perestroika and take the road of multiplying constructive effort, the road of labour and responsibility, of a true renewal of socialist society, or it will flinch in face of the complexity and the unusualness of the new tasks, succumbing to passions and emotions, embracing superficially attractive causes, and indulging in various public campaigns.

Or else it will lament the ironies of life, and drop back to sleep, which would suit all those who prefer the times of stagnation.

Clearly, there can be only one road to progress—the road of perestroika and renewal. The Party will use all its resources for the public consciousness to shape itself on the basis of democratisation and glasnost, and for directing it to constructive endeavour.

Renewal calls for guarantees. It calls for protection. Such guarantees have got to be created and strengthened through the consistent implementation of the radical economic reform and reform of the political system, and in the sphere of public consciousness, of spiritual and ideological life.

There is no denying that a lot of distressing, even tragic things have been said in recent years—things that can cause bitterness, pain, disappointment and disagreement. Certainly, it would have been much simpler not to know. But such an approach cannot give rise to a revolutionary consciousness, to a civic attitude, to the courage and lofty sense of responsibility that are so essential if we want perestroika to succeed. That was why the Party made its daring critical revision of the past, why it restored the truth of history, why it rehabilitated those who fell prey to unjust political accusations and abuses of the law. And this effort should be continued.

There should be no issues that we try to evade. There should be no doubts that we want to shrug off. This concerns the honour of our Party, our conscience, the intellectual worth of the Leninist Party.

It is neither simple nor easy to reach the truth, but a party that seeks ideological comfort, a party that believes that it has a grip on the truth and need not work for it each day, that it can easily pull the truth out of the hat—a party of that sort runs the risk of forfeiting its spiritual and moral authority, its revolutionary character, and its ability to be society's political vanguard.

Our public consciousness, and the Soviet citizen in general, have many excellent qualities. That is entirely true. Yet today we again state the need for single-mindedly cultivating people's initiative, self-reliance, and a keen interest, a need for the new. In the absence of this, we shall not be able to reach any new frontiers of perestroika. These qualities can be cultivated only if they are based on democratic forms of life.

Perestroika has pushed glasnost to the forefront. Glasnost is being practised in most diverse forms—in the work of governmental and public organisations, at meetings, at scientific and other conferences, and at gatherings of citizens. Today, the mass media are a powerful outlet for public opinion. They have done a lot to restore the truth of history, to restore justice, to criticise faults and omissions, to propagate the experience of perestroika, and to cultivate people's ability to think and act along new lines, creatively, with a purpose.

But now we must go further. We need a party press of a new quality. Its role of political educator, its organising role, must acquire that new quality. While continuing to criticise everything that hinders the progress of perestroika, our press today must thrust deep into the ongoing processes, and analyse the intricate dialectic and conflicting nature of the emergence of a new society in all areas of life. And for that we need more knowledge, more competence, and a more constructive and responsible approach. The press can attain this objective only if it involves broad segments of society and propagates the experience of all who may be called real foremen of perestroika.

No longer is it necessary to argue that there can be no renewal without glasnost, that without it we could not have analysed the reasons for negative phenomena and the ways of coping with them in so short a time, and that without it we could not have created a new moral and political climate in society, or given precedence to the ideas of perestroika.

Glasnost presupposes a plurality of opinions on all questions of home and international policy, a free play of different points of view, and discussion. It cannot fulfil its social role, it cannot serve the interests of the people and socialism, in the absence of such an approach.

But like any other feature of democracy, glasnost presupposes a high sense of responsibility. It is incompatible with any claim to monopoly of opinion, with imposition of dogmas in place of those that we have rejected. It is incompatible with group interests, and doubly so with any distortion of the facts and with any settling of personal scores. It is exceedingly undemocratic to deny people who had been subjected to criticism a chance to reply to that criticism in substance. That is not glasnost! And it is totally impermissible to use discussions, meetings, the press, and the television screen for squabbles or insults, and for name-calling.

At the same time, comrades, there are still cases when criticism is suppressed and even punished—and we must say so bluntly at our Conference. We come up against this in Party organisations, in work collectives, in public organisations, in the governmental apparatus, and also in relation to the mass media. All too often, the vigour and steadfastness of Soviet people in bringing to light concrete faults, and their stand against red tape and irresponsibility, against official abuses, tend to generate a furious reaction. And again we see officials gagging people, and even persecuting those who raise their voice in defence of the truth. Party organisations and Party committees at all levels must protect and promote criticism and self-criticism, and act from positions of principle.

Our mass media can play an enormous role in cultivating political culture and a civilised attitude in human relations, among other things—by setting the right example.

All this should evidently be borne in mind when drafting the Conference resolution on glasnost.

And one more ideological aspect of the Party's political activity at the present stage of perestroika. Today, reacting to the restoration of the truth and justice, to the renunciation of everything that deformed the socialist ideology and practice, to the destruction of stereotypes and dogmas, some people maintain that this is eroding the principles and pillars of socialism, and maligning its history. We cannot agree with this, comrades. Most emphatically not! We have no right to permit perestorika to founder on the rocks of dogmatism and conservatism, on anyone's prejudices and personal ambitions. What is at stake is the country's future, the future of socialism. And it is our duty to explain the sharpness of the situation to those who had not yet realised it. There can be no question of compromise on this most essential of issues.

I want to say categorically, here at the Conference, that we shall continue to develop all truly socialist values, and firmly eliminate everything that distorts revolutionary theory and the image of socialism.

The stormy and passionate discussions have clarified an important, gratifying and inspiring point. They have again, after so many trials, so many dramatic situations and tragic twists of fate, reaffirmed the correctness of the historical option for socialism made by our people in 1917.

Look around you: now everyone can say what he thinks and what he wants to say. And this diversity of opinions, judgements, and emotions finds an outlet in the life of society on an unprecedented scale and in many different forms. And what has happened? We can say without pretense and affectation that despite the sharpness of the criticism that we have heard of late, the Soviet people have once again, in the course of perestroika, resolutely voted in favour of socialism.

Yes, we have renounced everything that deformed socialism in the 1930s and that led to its stagnation in the 1970s. But we want a socialism that would be cleansed of the sediment and the distortions of the past period, and that inherits all the best elements born of the creative thinking of the founders of our teaching and put into effect by the labour and effort of the people and reflecting its hopes and aspirations. We want a socialism that absorbs all the progressive experience in world history and that utilises to the fullest all the achievements of human progress.

Certainly, it is impossible today to describe in detail the concrete image of the future that we are reaching for through perestroika. But the basic parameters and main features of what we call a qualitatively new state of society can and must be outlined.

They can be outlined because the chief orientations and tendencies of social change have already emerged. And they must be outlined because apart from the criticism of prevailing shortcomings, apart from the understanding of what we must renounce, we have an equally strong need for constructive and positive guidelines that would determine the ways and means of bringing our practices closer to socialism's ultimate aims and ideals.

We see socialism as a system of true and tangible humanism in which man is really the measure of all things. The development of society, from the economy all the way to the spiritual and ideological sphere, is directed to satisfying the needs of people, and their all-round advancement. And all of this is achieved through the labour, creativity, and energy of the people themselves.

We see socialism as a system with an effective and dynamic economy based on the finest achievements of scientific and technological progress and ensuring the highest possible productivity of labour—an economy that is directly geared to satisfying the needs of society, to which it flexibly adapts itself. The basis of such an economy consists of various forms of public and personal property, and of production in which the working people act as masters, and which ensures a direct connection between earnings and the results of labour. Plan-governed economic management stands for an organic combination of centralised decision-making as regards structural matters with broad independence of the production units as commodity producers operating for the market on khozraschot and self-reliance principles.

We see socialism as a system of social justice combining social guarantees of man's vital need for labour, health protection, education, housing and social security, with consistent abidance by the principle of distribution according to work done, uprooting all forms of wage-levelling and social parasitism. It is a society in which the abilities of the individual, the individual's fruitful labour, skills, and talents, are valued most of all and are duly rewarded materially and morally.

We see socialism as a system of lofty culture and morality. It inherits and multiplies the finest achievements of humanity's spiritual development and rich moral heritage. It is a society in which working people's lives are materially and spiritually full-blooded and rich; it rejects consumerism, amorality, and cultural primitivism. The concept of lofty culture also encompasses society's ecological culture—a concerned and sensible attitude towards the environment and people's productive activity, implying the conservation of natural wealth.

We see socialism as a system of genuine people's rule in which all working people have every opportunity to express their needs and interests and to participate in running social processes, and in which the estrangement between the individual and government is overcome. It is a society of socialist self-government by the people, of profound and consistent democracy in running the economy and the social processes, a society in which rule of law, openness and glasnost prevail.

We see socialism as a system of the true equality of all nations and nationalities, a system in which they are assured social and spiritual advancement and mutual enrichment, in which there is no room for any strife between nations, for nationalist and chauvinist prejudices, and in which internationalism and the fraternity of nations rule supreme.

Finally, we see socialism as a system which organically aspires by its nature and interests to peace and to strengthening cooperation and joint action by the fraternal socialist countries, and to normal, civilised relations between all nations and states on the democratic principles of equality, non-interference in each other's affairs, and recognition of the sovereign right of the peoples to shape their future as they see fit.

This is the democratic and humane image of socialism that we have in mind when we speak of the qualitatively new state of our society as an important stage in the advance to communism.

The coming years will determine the future of our country, the destiny of the Soviet system. For us this future will be what we make it. We ourselves—for no one will do it for us or instead of us. That is how matters stand, and we must provide a straightforward answer. Without reservations or omissions. Without attempts to evade an honest comparison between what we want and what really exists, between words and deeds, and between subjective notions and objective realities.

The Soviet people want a clear perspective. They want full-blooded and unconditional democracy. They want rule of law without reservations. Glasnost in all things, big and small. Fraternity and comradeship in their relations. Respect for hard work and talent, and faithful service for the cause and the good of society. We need no social utopias. What we want are clear guidelines and objective criteria of socialism at all stages of change. So that the tendencies of society's development should be clearly visible and no routine and affectation should, as they had so often in the past, ever overcome us.

We are convinced in the vitality of the Marxist-Leninist teaching which has scientifically substantiated the possibility of building a society of social justice and a civilisation of free and equal people. That is what guides us in our revolutionary perestroika. And that is how we shall act in its new and crucial stage that is being ushered in by our Party Conference!

Comrades, as I conclude my report, I should like to refer in general outline to the discussion that preceded the Conference and that was especially active after the Theses of the Central Committee were published.

It is a long time since our Party and society had so broad, so impassioned and fruitful a discussion, with fresh ideas, a large number of proposals, and an often sharp collision of opinions. At its centre were the most important issues of perestroika and the democratisation of public and inner-Party life. In effect, it concerned just one thing: how to do the job better.

It may be said that the proposals and ideas that the Central Committee submitted to the Conference are the collective product of the Party and the people as a whole.

Our aims are more democracy, more socialism, a better life for the working man, and greatness and well-being for the country.

In these several days, we shall have to sum up the work accomplished in the drive for these aims, and adopt documents of tremendous importance—documents that will give new momentum to perestroika, that will make it irreversible. This, indeed, determines the measure of responsibility to the Party and Soviet people of every delegate and our Conference as a whole.

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV'S SPEECH

June 30

Comrades, all the six commissions, set up to draft the resolutions, began their work yesterday in accordance with the Conference's decision.

One of these commissions is headed by the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. It must draft two resolutions. The first is of a general political character on the agenda of the Conference, and the other is on democratising society and on the reform of the political system.

Why have I taken the floor in the course of the Conference? An exchange of views on the question of delimiting functions between Party and state bodies took place at the meeting of this commission yesterday during the discussion of the draft resolutions. This talk was interesting and meaningful, and we finished it on a wave of mutual understanding. But, on the initiative of some members of the commission, who were unanimously supported by all, I was asked to tell the essence of that talk to the Conference because there is a certain misunderstanding of the proposals on this issue, especially those recommending secretaries of Party committees to the posts of chairmen of Soviets.

Evidently, what was said in the report was not enough. This can be explained because the report dealt with an immense range of problems relating to all the spheres of perestroika. This can be explained but, I believe, it is better to clarify the issue.

Comrades, it is important here to keep in mind the starting point, our strategic line in perestroika. It is being carried out in the interests of man, and man, the people, must be the protagonist in it. This determines the social orientation of perestroika which focusses on man and is aimed at overcoming everything negative that took place in the previous periods, so that man's welfare, dignity and living conditions improve continually. This also determines the reliance on democratisation in the broadest sense—in the economy, politics and spiritual sphere, on really making it possible to draw man into all the perestroika processes because he is the protagonist of perestroika. It is neither the apparatus nor any element of our political system, important as it is, but precisely the people who are bound to play a crucial, revolutionary role.

We have started a process of democratisation in the intellectual sphere and have created such a public atmosphere in our country which makes it possible in this way, like here at the Conference, to discuss all the questions of concern to us, to which answers should be given. We are widely participating in the radical economic reform. Today it involves tens of millions and tomorrow it will involve hundreds of millions of people—the entire national economy and the whole country. It is a large-scale and in-depth process. It would be naive to think that in such an immense country as ours all the problems accumulated in it could be solved as follows: you fall asleep today and when you wake up everything is all right. We must get rid of these illusions. Immense work is ahead of us, and it requires revolutionary tenacity and stamina, and only he who withstands this strain will triumph. Regrettably, some of us are afraid of the democratisation processes launched in the country, the movement of public thought. They are panicking and shouting for help. By contrast, others are discontent with the fact that nothing changes overnight and are demanding that something be done immediately, that the most drastic measures be taken, etc.

No, comrades, this would be the simplest but erroneous line. We have started a large-scale process and are carrying out a radical economic reform, and the reform of the political system is now on the agenda. We have come up to it as a result of the development of the perestroika itself, as a result of its internal logic. It is simply a vital necessity to us.

Why so? Many people remember how it was in the past, while those who are younger must know about that. We have had quite a few major attempts at socio-political reforms in the post-war period. Take the September 1953 Plenary Meeting, for example. Vasili Starodubtsev has spoken here now and said everything right. I support him as an innovator and a thinking person who is dedicated to the cause and to his land, and whose example can be used for teaching others. So the September 1953 Plenary Meeting imparted a powerful impetus to the development of the countryside, and wheels really started turning at that time. I was working then as a farm machine operator with a machine and tractor station, and I distinctly remember that it was a real revival of the village. By 1958, however, everything had stalled. Or take the March 1965 Plenary Meeting. That was not just a plenary meeting on agricultural issues. It was a plenary meeting on how to run all things in the country, how to shape policy on a scientific and democratic basis with the participation of society, how to manage the economy and how to handle Party affairs. If the plans projected at that time had been translated into life we would have made remarkable and confident progress. By the way, under the influence of that approach the 8th five-year plan was the best among the recent ones. But, in the long run, the March Plenary Meeting and the new agricultural policy stalled, too.

So did the reform in industry which was started in 1965. I may remind you, comrades, that it dealt with almost the same things which we are projecting in our economic reform now. In fact, we are making use of many things from that earlier reform.

So, where is the hitch? All those past efforts ran into the political system with its administrative methods of society management. So I am telling you now: if we do not remodel our political system, all our undertakings and all our momentous projects will just falter. That is why I disagree with Leonid Abalkin whose speech contains obvious signs of economic determinism and general underestimation of the superstructure which we have set out to remodel. He has spoken to the effect that it is not really important how we will be electing candidates and sitting in sessions and what political institutions we are going to have. Yet, the report has dealt not with minor things, but with a major reform which our Conference, our people and, indeed, the whole world are clearly seeing already. It's a pity Comrade Abalkin has not seen it.

Economic laws must be learned and used. But, as Lenin put it, living, creative socialism is the product of the masses. The masses can join in all processes of society development when there are the necessary preconditions for that and mechanisms of democracy in all spheres: political, economic and intellectual. We have done a great deal in the intellectual sphere and will carry on, no matter how hard it may be, with the radical economic reform. But all that will stall again if we do not remodel our political system.

The ideas underlying our reform are known to all. Incidentally, we all share them; they'd have cost nothing if the Politbureau alone, a group of people had thought them up. We've been accumulating ideas for these three years to find the right approach to the issue. We analysed our history to draw lessons from it, to see why a country with tremendous potentials like ours was facing a crisis, why we were not satisfied with how our society and economy were functioning. The analysis resulted in some conclusions on which to base our concepts of today and tomorrow. These past three years also have given us first-hand experience. True, we got into bottlenecks every now and then, but every obstacle makes us cleverer not with every year, but with every day.

I see Central Committee work patterns change from one plenary meeting to another. Our reality, and the logic of perestroika are invigorating. People start to fulfill themselves and produce new ideas with glasnost and socialist pluralism of opinion. We can choose the best from the variety of these ideas and we make our choice all together.

In short, everything we have offered to the Party and society is the product of the brainwork of all of us. So let's discuss these proposals in a serious and responsible manner.

The cornerstone of democratisation is to revive Soviets as full-fledged bodies of people's power formed on the basis of the new election system to fully express the various interests of our society.

The reform must also give Soviets full power in their districts, towns, regions, republics, and so on. This must be laid down in appropriate legislation. Extended rights of Soviets also need a material basis; this was said in the report. All previous decisions had one drawback: they dwelt at length on what a Soviet was to do, including coordination of work of all organisations in its area, and ended with this proviso:

"within its jurisdiction". When I met secretaries just before we started preparing the Central Committee Theses, Filipp Popov, Secretary of the Altai Territorial Party Committee, who addressed you yesterday, said to me: "I chaired a regional executive committee for seven years. Wasn't I inspired whenever I read another resolution on Soviets! Soviets will really take power in their hands now, I thought. What a field for work! So I read on and on, until I got to the addition, 'within its jurisdiction'. But the jurisdiction was so minute you needed a microscope to have a proper view of it."

Now's the time to really settle things. And we have to bear in mind that we must work out our political course. This Conference is to set the example of how a true political vanguard should work. We shouldn't specify whether 10 or 20 per cent of incomes should be allocated to local Soviets. This is the subject for working out a specific programme with the participation of republics, territories and regions. We must above all determine the general direction of work to have the power of Soviets revived. That's our task. But every political line rests on concrete, practical things. We need practical offers and arguments to crystallise into a political platform.

Viktor Postnikov and other comrades who addressed you here needn't worry that now Soviets are to order work collectives about. Nothing of the kind. Their relations must rest on a strictly legal basis and certain norms. The local authorities must thoroughly understand the industrial enterprises in their territories, and the latter must reciprocate with respectful attitudes to those authorities. After all, the authorities are elected by none other than the people who work at those enterprises. They want to see not only their branch interests but those of the entire area properly attended to. This is an issue of practical dialectics, and it has to find expression in legislation. As to economic issues, they must surely be considered irrespective of regional, republican or national subordination of any particular enterprise.

And another vital question: the delineation of functions between Party and state bodies. The Party first tackled it in Lenin's lifetime. It could do something at that time, but later the administrative command system got the upper hand. That system was responsible for the well-known distortions. The Party was overloaded with functions alien to it, and emasculated the Soviets. Hampered by narrow issues at hand, the Party couldn't tackle the major political matters of development of socialism and the country. We paid dear for it. Look how many urgent problems we have! They require theoretical analyses and an effective political course to be followed by the elaboration of mechanisms to implement that course. The Nizhni Tagil delegate was outspoken in the true worker's way when he demanded immediate solution of many issues. But he also demanded severity. Well, that's possible, comrades. If you like it so, let's be severe.

But it's not what we need. As we have started the renovation of the Party and our society as a whole, we must give up the old ways which brought our nation into the bad state it's in.

I will never accept such an approach. This is my position, and I am telling you frankly and honestly: my position is firm. If we do not involve the people in management, no apparatus (and we already have eighteen million people in it and spend 40,000 million roubles for their upkeep annually) will cope with the task. And it has failed, because the system of economic management and government as a whole needs radical change. This is what we are discussing now and what we have been doing over the past three years. I am convinced that we are on the right track.

If we really want to revive the Soviets, we must get down to work in real earnest.

At present, many problems are resolved by Party committees and their branch departments. The Party should be relieved of this, and it should be revived on the truly Leninist principles as the political vanguard of society designed to ensure the elaboration of questions of vital importance for the life of our country, and objectives for its further advance. The Party should engage in shaping ideology and in organising the masses. It should maintain close links with the people, inspire, support and protect them. We need a party which would embark on a wise and far-sighted personnel policy in the interest of perestroika.

And lastly, if we in this multiethnic country fail to take into consideration the interests of each republic and of autonomy, perestroika will not work. Perestroika can only be successful when all nations and nationalities feel that they are full-fledged participants in the national cause, and that all that is being done is in our common interests and in the interests of each nation.

This requires a tremendous amount of intellectual, theoretical and political work. I have listened to many scientists here, some of them offering a serious analysis and helping us when it comes to spotlighting major shortcomings of the existing system. But, frankly speaking, the number of constructive suggestions is rather limited and new ideas are in short supply.

Meanwhile, we are faced with the need to promote perestroika, and the people want perestroika to develop faster. This is why the Party should start a scientific analysis of its basic processes. We have a host of problems connected with the agrarian policy. This policy needs to be further elaborated and made complete in order to accord with the current stage of perestroika, with the needs of society. Ethnic problems are literally knocking both at the doors and on the windows of our home. We have begun studying them, and they are going to require the holding of a plenary meeting of the Central Committee. We need to attend to the problems of educating the young, of bringing up our successors. These all are problems of great importance, which exercise huge influence on the future of our country. They must be solved. That is why the Party should be relieved of the functions not specifically belonging to it. The Party should launch powerful efforts in all these political spheres—precisely the Party, for I don't see any other suitable force. We strongly rebuff all those who try to call in question the role and the importance of the Party. Some people want to present matters as if the past offers the following conclusion: the Party should be restricted. No, comrades, that's wrong. If we suddenly contracted this virus—a credibility gap and doubts about the role of our Party—this would be the best gift to the adversaries of perestroika.

The Party should revive itself on the Leninist principles as the political vanguard, and it should bring out its potential. This is being looked forward to by society and progressives the world over. I am sure the CPSU is up to the task. It has started boldly analysing things, assumed responsibility, and begun facing the fire of criticism. Today, many criticise the CPSU both at home and abroad. Never mind, our Party is strong; it can endure all this, work out a correct policy and lead society forward.

Such a party can by right be called the political vanguard. Our Leninist Party is exactly such a vanguard, and it will enhance this role even further in the future!

Now, a few words about the Soviets, which are receiving tremendous executive power and rights. What actually happens? Today, the Soviets as bodies consisting of representatives of the people are reduced to the role of mates of their own executive committees.

I have sat on various executive committees for many years—for nine years as First Secretary of the Stavropol Territorial Party Committee, and before that, I was a member of a city Soviet as secretary of that city's Party committee. So I have an inside knowledge of the matter. The executive committees call sessions and determine their agenda: it doesn't matter whether a certain question needs to be urgently considered or not; the executive committee includes it in the agenda when it deems fit. The entire apparatus reports to the executive committee, as do all the departments dealing with specific issues. Where can a deputy go but to the executive committee?

Today, comrades, the Soviets as bodies of people's power find themselves in secondary positions or even in the background; they receive their orders, at best, from their executive committees. So if we want to revive the Soviets, we must first and foremost revive the kind of Soviet representing people and give it appropriate rights, so that it distributes all other powers.

As I already said, the Soviets certainly must be formed on a different basis, and must employ more active people. We do not need cumbersome Soviets. But we will think about it later. What is necessary right now is to define our approach. Soviets should form their executive committees and select department heads through their commissions after discussing the candidacies.

But heads of executive committee departments are not to be members of Soviets. At the moment, members of the executive branch of government are also members of Soviets, and, as deputies, can decide on their own what to do. But who will control them? So, comrades, it's going to be a drastic change.

Don't think everybody will applaud us. Yet, if we want to revive the Soviets, we must embark on this path.

And none of the executive committee members, except for the chairman, should be a deputy. They should rather function like a cabinet appointed by the Soviet to carry out its decisions.

So, to make the Soviets work, their authority must be backed up with the Party's prestige.

We've got nothing to feel shy about either before the people or before the world. We are the party in office, and the ruling party in any country forms a government and wields executive power at different levels. Some parties ascend to power through revolutions, peaceful or violent, others through election campaigns. But that party which is in office always nominates its candidates and gets them elected by democratic procedure.

Such is the position of our Party, and we are not going to give up the role of the governing party in our country. On the contrary, we want to enhance it while admitting that we are aware of our increased responsibility at this stage of perestroika. That being the case, the point at issue, presumably, is to back up the sovereign power of the Soviets with the Party's prestige. Incidentally, the idea was first suggested at the grassroots level, in letters sent in by Communists. We began debating it and then invited a broad range of people to participate in the discussion, we consulted lawyers, and I raised the issue three times with the secretaries of regional Party committees and the Central Committee. Not all of them accepted the idea at once. But once they thought twice about it, they saw it would help the Party to revive itself as the political vanguard, rid itself of functions which do not specifically belong to it and, in the meantime, enhance the role of the Soviets. If we don't do this, the current traditions are so deep-seated that everything will remain as it was.

So it makes sense for the Soviets to elect their chairpersons and their presidiums consisting of the heads of standing commissions. The presidium is not to supervise the work of the executive committee directly. It's what the Soviet and its sessions should be doing. Since the executive committee is being vested with the responsibility for putting decisions into effect, it, too, should be spared petty tutelage.

Some comrades suggest that the Party secretary should stay in the executive committee. If so, he, too, becomes an executive officer. But who, then, is going to supervise the execution of political decisions taken by the session? If the one who decides is also responsible for the implementation of the decision, who will be in a position to check whether he has really done it? This explains why sometimes decisions are taken but not implemented.

I gave much more scope for arguments on this motion than planned, so that nobody would get any impression that there was an intention to use the authority of the Conference to push through an idea on the quiet. No, comrades, we have to proceed openly, with an understanding of the immensity of the cause we are embarking upon. We should rely on the prestige of the Party and revive the Soviets. If we bring those two major forces in our political system into conflict, nothing will work out. There will be no progress. The whole point is to combine them harmoniously.

Under the new requirements which we are to approve, secretaries at all levels will be elected at plenary meetings from two, three or more candidates by secret ballot. This means they should be tested in a democratic way, and only then be recommended. A future Party secretary will have to be approved by the Soviets, the representatives of the working people—to go through another campaign, so to speak. They will discuss him, and it remains to be seen if he gets as far as the vote. It is not accidental that we use the phrase "as a rule". It means that things will not work out for the nominee everywhere, and another person may be nominated. But then the following question will arise: Why is the secretary not elected? Then let the Party committee sort out what person is leading it.

In other words, this implies, first and foremost, extra obligations and, second, control by the working people over the Party. The Party, as it were, is put to the test by democratic procedure. This is essential to know the will of the people and have their support. And another thing. In resolving this matter, we must get rid of a narrow egoistic approach. Let us forget for the duration of the Conference where we work, and let's discuss, in a spirit of Party comradeship, how we could assure effective functioning of our political system.

But if we keep trying to make everything fit ourselves, we will never get out of the current situation. We have attempted to look realistically at the entire political process, and have drawn the whole Party and the people into this, openly and democratically. I feel we are coming up with the right proposals.

This is what I wanted to say on behalf of the commission. This is not yet the conclusion, comrades.

SPEECH BY MIKHAIL GORBACHEV AT THE CLOSING OF THE CONFERENCE

July 1

Comrades, our Conference is ending. The documents we have just adopted on the outcome of the discussion, and the discussion of the documents itself, relieve me of the necessity to deliver a long concluding statement. Still, the Conference is an event of such a scale that the work we have done in the past four days needs to be evaluated by the strictest of standards.

This is not in order to pay tribute to the once prevalent tradition of eulogising every successive Party forum, but in order, in my opinion, to grasp the place of the 19th Conference in the life of the Party and of the entire country. A big event has occurred in the history of our Party.

First of all, as regards the atmosphere that reigned during the discussion. It was a true, open Party discussion about the things that matter the most, things that are troubling Communists and all Soviet people today. It was an attempt to find answers to questions which are bothering them. The Palace of Congresses has not witnessed such a discussion before, comrades, and I don't think I'll be transgressing against the truth if I say that nothing like it has occurred in our country for nearly the last 60 years. We can, indeed, legitimately say that the Conference has been conducted in a Leninist spirit and that it was marked by a high sense of responsibility to the people and the revolution. That alone makes it especially significant.

I must mention the exceedingly high sense of involvement shown by the delegates. Indeed, the situation was anything but simple. There were nearly three hundred who wanted to speak. Unfortunately, not all of them could be given the floor. But the need to speak out was to some degree satisfied by the opportunity to speak in the drafting commissions: as I have already mentioned, nearly 150 people spoke at their sittings. This is something new for us. All in all, nearly one-tenth of the delegates took part in drafting the documents, so that many specific issues which arose during the discussion were examined and settled in a businesslike fashion.

The spirit that reigned at the Conference was very exacting. All issues were treated outspokenly, in a principled way, but, at the same time, the spirit was one of Party comradeship, I would even say of well-wishing towards each other. That, too, provides an example for the whole Party, the whole of our society, to follow. Indeed, that is as it should be among like-minded people who are tackling the great cause of perestroika and renewal, and who feel that hundreds, thousands, and millions of their Party comrades, all Soviet people, are behind them and are following our work with enormous interest. In this sense, I daresay, the Conference reflected the political atmosphere taking shape in the country; it showed the degree of democratic development that the Party has attained, and not just the Party but also all of Soviet society, in the period since the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee.

Now about the content of our work. Its main outcome was that a programmatic political position has been worked out on all the fundamental issues discussed by the Party and the people on the basis of the Theses of the CPSU Central Committee, which thereafter became the topic of lively discussion in this hall. In so doing, the Conference did not simply endorse the proposals of the Central Committee, but enriched them in many ways through the experience of various Party organisations and work collectives. Let me say that all of us have, with tremendous interest and deep attention, followed whatever was said from this rostrum by workers, farmers, writers, actors, scientists and cultural workers, specialists in various economic fields, managers, and Party functionaries.

In substance, the Conference covered the entire set of problems facing the Party and the country at the present stage. But I would single out the following as the most important topic of our discussion and the resulting resolutions. At the centre of attention here was the role of the Party as the political vanguard. What could I say on this score if I were to briefly sum up the opinions of the delegates? We are all convinced that the Party has a clear-cut programme of action—the one worked out at the 27th Congress and enriched by the already available experience of perestroika. It has the unconditional support of the people, who have accepted the policy of perestroika and will not allow it to be abandoned. As far as I can see, the Conference delegates have no doubt on this score.

The wish to see the Party still stronger has resounded here most passionately and resolutely. This can only be welcomed, and I think all of us are pleased. As put down in its resolution, the Conference demanded that our Party should in every respect be a Leninist party not only in content but also in its methods. In other words, it must renounce command-style methods once and for all, and conduct its policy by means of organisational, personnel and ideological work in strict conformity with Soviet laws and the democratic principles of society.

There should be no duplication of the work of state bodies. There should be no dictating to trade unions, the YCL, and other public organisations, or to the unions of writers, artists, etc. Does this mean that the Party's leading role can weaken? Doubts of that kind have, indeed, been expressed. As I see it, the Conference gave a sufficiently clear and convincing answer: no, the Party's leading role cannot weaken. As the ruling party, it has all the requisite levers to implement its leading role. And the most important lever of all are the 20 million Communists carrying out the Party's political line in all areas of life.

In the setting of democratisation and glasnost, and with the functions of Party committees changing, the Party's authority, comrades, will be put to a serious test. This test is already under way. Let's be frank: in the times of the command-style system, when the Party apparatus supervised absolutely everything, it was sometimes hard to discern where a Party committee and Party secretary had true leadership prestige, and where that prestige was at best the official authority obeyed merely out of necessity.

It is beyond doubt, comrades, that perestroika and the reform of the political system are creating a fundamentally different situation. In the new conditions, the Party's leading role will depend entirely on its actual prestige which at every point will have to be reaffirmed by concrete deeds. That is why it is absolutely essential for us to overcome even the slightest passivity shown by Party members. Every Communist must become a fighter for perestroika, for the revolutionary renewal of society. Let that be the chief mandate of our Conference.

On the whole, comrades, the Conference is a major stage in the development of the Leninist course adopted by the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Congress of the Party, and in the deepening of the theory and practice of perestroika. This is what has determined its political scale and weight.

In this connection, I should like to express a fundamental thought. We have adopted a number of deeply considered and crucial decisions. But if we drag our feet in carrying them out—and that is one of the chronic maladies which we have not yet remedied (this also afflicted us in the first few years of perestroika)—much of what we have accomplished will fall by the wayside. This should be said loud and clear. Let's get rid of our old weaknesses and begin immediately to tackle the work ahead of us without waiting for additional decrees, injunctions, instructions, and explanations.

The essential work of the CPSU Central Committee and the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet should be properly organised. The coming elections in the Party should be based on the principles we have agreed upon here. Alterations in the structure of the Party apparatus should be introduced this autumn. And as concerns the reorganisation of Soviets, the entire set of related issues should be examined during the autumn session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. Elections of USSR People's Deputies could be held in April 1989, and elections to the Supreme Soviets of Union and Autonomous Republics in the autumn of that year.

In view of the great significance of these issues, the Presidium of the Conference is submitting, for consideration by the delegates, a brief draft resolution on certain urgent steps to implement a reform of our country's political system.

That sums up the political results of the Conference. Upon returning home, each delegate will be able to tell his or her co-workers, Communists and non-Communists alike—all citizens—how we will work to implement its decisions.

To continue. The issue of democratising society and radically reforming our political system was at the centre of our attention throughout the deliberations of the Conference. I think that having defined its major aspects and parameters, we have answered the main question before us, the one about enhancing perestroika and guaranteeing its irreversibility. We have, therefore, every reason to say that the Conference has coped with its principal task.

Naturally, intensive organisational work to translate this reform into reality lies ahead. We will have to discuss everything thoroughly in our Party and in our society. But now we know how we should go about reforming the political system; we have arrived at a common viewpoint and articulated it in the form of policy guidelines.

Equally important is the resolve—which was forcefully expressed at the Conference—to continue and enhance our radical economic reform. Essential conditions for this were created by the decisions of the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and by the adoption of legislative acts, particularly the Laws on the State Enterprise (Association) and on Cooperatives. We focused our attention on the experience acquired by countless enterprises during the first months of operating according to the new principles and on the progress of the reform. And that is as it should be: everything occurring within the underlying infrastructure is of immense importance to society; we are dealing with the very foundations of perestroika.

As concerns the key landmarks of the discussion on these issues, the point is above all that after the Conference we must get down in earnest to the job of dismantling the mechanism which is holding us back. Representatives of virtually all delegations said that the bureaucracy was still showing its teeth, resisting and trying to sabotage things. As a result, the reform is hitting snags in many areas. That is perhaps one of the more important observations the delegates have made here, and it means that the phenomenon is widespread. Therefore, we in the Central Committee, in the Government and in central and local organisations must do everything we can to advance the radical economic reform more vigorously.

I think the delegates are unanimous in their support of those comrades who spoke about the present need to concentrate the bulk of our efforts on tackling the food problem, to make comprehensive assistance to our farmers and the revival of our agriculture a top priority. We should do everything we can during the current five-year period. We have already mastered a great deal and invested, via different channels, additional capital and resources into this sphere. It is important for all this investment to be used properly and effectively. Reviving our rural areas is, simply, our sacred duty. I think that after the Conference, we should become more demanding and keep a close watch over the entire effort to implement its guidelines about supporting the agrarian sector and its workers. Then we will succeed in solving the food problem without delay, too.

Another salient feature of the Conference, as I see it, is that it discussed the more urgent political and economic issues in close connection with the sphere of non-material values, which gave it what I would call an ethical dimension. It is a sign of our profound awareness that at the current stage of social development, with the revolution in science and technology exerting an enormous influence on all social processes, no problem can be resolved without tapping the intellectual and moral potential of our people. Hence the elevated, I would even say super-elevated, tone of our discussion concerning science, education, culture, literature and art.

I cannot recall any other Party forum or even congress at which such a broad range of issues was discussed. Different views were expressed from this rostrum reflecting the trends that run in concert but sometimes also clash in our public consciousness. That is natural. We are promoting a pluralism of views and reject having a monopoly on intellectual attitudes. But I think you will agree that there is a common basic idea in the diverse opinions that have been voiced at the Conference: we must be guided in everything by the interests of man, of the people, we must assert the humanitarian values of socialism. Then we will have a healthy moral climate in our society, a vigorous and creative intellectual quest and a truly flourishing culture.

What we need is not blind faith in a bright future but scientific projections based on a profound and precise knowledge of the inexhaustible potential inherent in a citizen of socialist society, in his work and his creative spirit. That is exactly why we refer to a new and humane image of socialism as the objective of perestroika.

Glasnost was one of the main subjects of the Conference—primarily because our debate was itself shaped by the climate of openness, frankness and sincerity that is spreading in our society. Another reason was that we were discussing how we should handle glasnost and whether it has reasonable limits. Although different views were expressed, I think that on this score, too, we eventually agreed that we must in every way support the mass media and their work to get rid of all kinds of negative phenomena we inherited from the past, and to encourage bold, original and interesting people, the true champions of perestroika.

On the other hand, there was an equally clear demand that journalists be more responsible for what they write, abandon parochial and departmental ambitions, likes and dislikes and lay no claim to a monopoly on the truth. The people remember too well the times when the printed word became a docile tool of authoritarianism and arbitrary bureaucratic attitudes. Hence the great importance of learning, now that all spheres of life are becoming humanised, how to criticise and discuss things in a civilised, comradely manner. I think that on this score, too, the Conference did produce useful results: we all have gained a better understanding of the way a discussion in the Party should be conducted.

In connection with this discussion I feel I must comment on the statement made by Boris Yeltsin. To begin with, I think we were right in giving him the floor. As I said, democracy calls for removing the veil of secrecy from such questions—although there is, in fact, no secrecy about this case.

In that part of his statement which was devoted to the specific issues discussed at the Conference, Comrade Yeltsin expressed views largely consonant with what was said both in the report and during the debate. In this sense, his proposals are part of the mainstream of our discussion. We should also note that, like other speakers, Comrade Yeltsin came out for continuing and promoting perestroika for the good of our society, our people.

What I cannot accept, however, is Boris Yeltsin's contention that we have launched perestroika without a sufficiently thorough analysis of the causes behind the phenomenon of stagnation or of the present state of our society, without an in-depth analysis of our history or of the Party's failings, that our perestroika is nothing but words.

During preparations for the Conference, during the discussion held in our Party and in our society, and at the Conference itself we made a principled assessment of perestroika's accomplishments and problems and took stock of the work performed by Party and government bodies, by work collectives and by the country as a whole. Comrades, I hold that we were right to do that because of the concern we all feel for perestroika. This concern has been felt here, too, and it has mobilised us and strengthened our commitment to act more resolutely in furthering the process of reform.

Nor do I regard as justified or acceptable Comrade Yeltsin's critical remarks about our failure to effect revolutionary transformations over the past three years. Of course, if one refers to the overall, long-term plan aimed at imparting, through perestroika, a new quality to our society, we cannot yet speak about revolutionary transformations. We have spent a great deal of time understanding the society we live in, the past in which many current phenomena are rooted, the world around us and our relationship to it. All this needed to be comprehended in order to prevent "revolutionary leaps forward", which are extremely dangerous, and to rule out improvisation in politics. We needed to involve society and its intellectual and scientific potential in order to understand this and, after serious and critical analysis, to work out the policy of perestroika, and then to transform it into practical solutions in the main directions. That had to be done, and we needed to do it in a responsible way. So we proposed the policy of perestroika, to which there was no alternative. This in itself proved to be a great achievement of the Party during the past stage.

We share Comrade Yeltsin's concern for the accomplishment of the practical tasks which are uppermost in our people's minds, and I think the speeches we have heard here, particularly by representatives of the working class, have shown that the working people hope for a speedy solution of these matters.

I don't know why Comrade Yeltsin was critical of the Theses of the Central Committee as well, and questioned that they had been thoroughly and well thought out. This document has been regarded as a very serious one in the Party, in the country, and in the world. Nor is his assertion that members of the Central Committee took no part in preparing the Theses understandable. I personally met with two-thirds of the Central Committee members, not to mention that they wrote and came forward with their suggestions. And finally, there was a plenary meeting which discussed the draft Theses. Comrade Yeltsin participated in its work, but said nothing and did not ask for the floor. The Central Committee members are present here, and they remember how it was.

I think, comrades, our Conference, the way the discussion proceeded, and the documents we have adopted are the best proof that perestroika in our country is going on and is gathering strength.

While trying to look with good intentions into what is going on in the Central Committee and the Politbureau—and this concerns the General Secretary in the first place—I cannot but go back to the history of the matter. When we recommended Comrade Yeltsin for the post of the First Secretary of the Moscow City Committee of the Party, we proceeded from the fact that it was necessary to improve the work of the Moscow Party organisation, and that the general situation in Moscow called for improvement, too. An experienced and energetic person with a critical approach was needed for the job. We had seen that Comrade Yeltsin had these qualities, and so he was nominated for that post. Your humble servant had a hand in it, too. At first Comrade Yelstin set about his work actively, did a great deal to invigorate it, and launched a struggle against the negative phenomena that had accumulated in Moscow. We supported him in these efforts, realising that the Moscow Party organisation was facing no easy tasks, but at some point we felt that there was something wrong. That had begun when the time came for practical solutions to the problems of perestroika, for introducing it in every sphere of life, when intensive and profound efforts were required to achieve radical change. There was too much work for the City Party Committee and its First Secretary to cope with. Comrade Yeltsin, instead of relying on the Party organisation, on people, and on collectives, adopted peremptory attitudes and command methods. That was followed by an endless shuffling of personnel.

At first we believed that this was, perhaps, justified, that the wrong personnel had been chosen, and the conference held in the city had failed to solve the personnel question correctly. Most likely that was the case. Not everybody had proved capable of solving the new tasks or shouldering the leadership of the Party organisation at that turning point in the development of the city and the country. But when he set to replacing personnel for the second and the third time, this began to worry us. I reproved Comrade Yeltsin at a Politbureau meeting. I said then in a comradely manner that he should draw appropriate conclusions and take all that into consideration in his work. In other words, we offered assistance to him, nothing more than that.

What, in my opinion, is behind the drama of Comrade Yeltsin as a political worker? At the time when it came to tackling practical matters, he did not have enough strength to do it, and so he fell back on high-flown talk and pronouncements and resorted to command methods. But even then—this should be made known to all and we should clear up this matter entirely—the Politbureau did not consider Comrade Yeltsin a lost man and did not think that he could not go on working. So we continued to support him, which I said at the plenary meeting of the Moscow Party Committee, and big decisions concerning Moscow were adopted.

While on vacation in August 1987, I received a letter from Comrade Yeltsin, in which he asked to be relieved of his position as First Secretary of the City Committee of the Party. I decided that nothing should be done hastily, that things had to be sorted out carefully. The Politbureau did not even know of the letter's existence. I decided to have a talk with Boris Yeltsin after my leave and suggested that he first see through the celebrations marking the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, and after that we would meet and talk. He agreed to that. But contrary to that arrangement he unexpectedly took the floor at the October Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee. I have already spoken about the import of his speech. And my speech at the plenary meeting of the Moscow City Committee was published—I didn't say anything more at that time. After the discussion, and when the comrades voiced their criticisms, Comrade Yeltsin admitted his errors.

Let me quote from the transcript of the plenary meeting—an episode at the end of the meeting, after everyone had spoken.

"GORBACHEV: Tell us your view on the remarks made by the comrades in the Central Committee. They have said a lot and want to know what you think about it. They have to make a decision.

"YELTSIN: With the exception of certain remarks, on the whole I agree that I let down the Central Committee and the Moscow City Organisation by making a speech today—that was a mistake.

"GORBACHEV: Have you got enough energy to remain in charge?

"VOICES: He won't be able to carry on. He cannot be left in this post.

"GORBACHEV: Wait a minute. I'm asking him. Let's be democratic about this. We all want to hear his answer before reaching a decision.

"YELTSIN: I said that I let down the Central Committee of the Party, the Politbureau, the Moscow Party Organisation. I will repeat what I have said: 'I'm asking to be relieved of the post of Alternate Member of the Politbureau and of the duties of head of the Moscow City Party Organisation.'"

So these are the facts. After Yeltsin's speech was found to be politically incorrect—which he himself admitted—I still urged the Central Committee members: let's not decide now whether or not to relieve him from the duties of Alternate Member of the Politbureau, let's ask the Politbureau to consider the question. But the situation had already evoked such a response that the matter could not be left unattended. We related all this at a plenary meeting of the Moscow City Committee, and the comrades there spoke far more critically of Comrade Yeltsin's work—you know about that.

On the whole, comrades, I think that this is a lesson not only for Comrade Yeltsin, this is also a lesson for the Politbureau, for the General Secretary of the Central Committee, for all of us. We must proceed firmly along the path of decisively reviving our Party on Leninist principles, on the basis of large-scale democratisation, relying on the primary Party organisations, the cadres, and the elected activists. We cannot accomplish the great tasks of perestroika that we have set ourselves by employing the old methods which have been denounced not only by the Party, but by the whole of society, by time itself.

And there is another lesson. Comrades at the Conference have correctly remarked that people should have been informed and told everything, and in that case the situation would not have developed as it did.

I will return to the question which is of the greatest concern to the delegates—I feel this as I hear the speeches and read the written notes. It is how to ensure the implementation of the decisions we have taken. Let us organise the entire activity of the Party in accordance with the Conference's resolutions, and not wait for the next Congress to put all this in the Rules. There are the political guidelines of the Conference, and we shall follow them.

And another thing. Let us not put off the reform of the entire political system, as we need it to advance perestroika. It is coming up against the existing political system already now. We must not allow a repetition of what happened at the January Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee. That was an important meeting at which a profound analysis was made and the causes of what had happened in the country and in the Party were revealed. But we did not consider the ways of implementing the decisions of the Plenary Meeting, they "hovered in the air", and things did not proceed as we expected. The decisions of our Party Conference should under no circumstances be allowed to suffer the same fate.

Many of the questions that were raised here are not covered by the resolutions. I think all this should be summed up for discussion at a plenary meeting, and specific assignments be given and their fulfilment be verified. In many of their written notes the delegates suggested that a verbatim account should be published. We should do that by all means in order to equip our Party and the whole of society with the ideas expressed during the Conference debate.

And one more issue, comrades, raised shortly before and at the Conference—that of building a monument to victims of the repressions. You will probably recall that this was mentioned in the concluding remarks at the 22nd Congress of the Party and was received with approval. The question was also raised at the 27th Congress of the Party, but it was not given a practical solution. As noted in the Report, restoring justice with regard to the victims of lawlessness is our political and moral duty. Let us perform that duty and build a monument in Moscow. I am sure that this step will be supported by all Soviet people.

In conclusion, I want to go back once more to the question of how to deepen the revolutionary perestroika launched in the country on the initiative and under the leadership of the Party, and how to make it irreversible. All our work, all the proceedings, the final documents—all this has shown that a clear answer has been worked out by the Conference: democratisation, economic reform, and transformation of the political system will make perestroika irreversible; through revolutionary perestroika our society will reach a qualitatively new state, and socialism will be given a new, humane and democratic image. We will go forward in a creative quest for ways and methods to attain this goal under the conditions of democracy and glasnost. We will work persistently to carry out our objectives.

Mikhail Gorbachev then read out the text of a Resolution, which was adopted unanimously. He wished the delegates every success in their work.

RESOLUTIONS OF THE 19TH ALL-UNION CONFERENCE OF THE CPSU

ON CERTAIN URGENT MEASURES FOR THE PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORM OF THE COUNTRY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

The 19th All-Union Party Conference has extensively discussed and adopted major decisions on promoting perestroika, reforming the political system and further democratising the Party and society. These decisions are of tremendous historic importance for the destiny of the country. They are part and parcel of perestroika and, at the same time, its powerful accelerator, and they open up a possibility for society to confidently advance along the road of revolutionary renewal, and to strengthen the Party's role as the political vanguard.

The adopted decisions are urgent and it is important, in the interests of the undertaking, to start implementing them without delay.

The Conference deems it necessary:

1. To conduct this year a review-and-election campaign in Party organisations, proceeding from the decisions of the Conference on the reform of the political system and on the democratisation of the Party's life;

To accomplish, before the end of this year, a reorganisation of the Party apparatus, to introduce the necessary changes in its structure, taking into account the adopted decisions on the division of functions between the Party and the Soviets;

To recommend the CPSU Central Committee to carry out the required practical work.

2. The Conference calls for submitting to the regular session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR drafts of legislative acts on the restructuring of government bodies, the necessary supplements and amendments to the Constitution of the USSR, as well as for organising elections and holding a Congress of People's Deputies in April 1989 at which the new bodies of state power shall be formed.

The elections to the republic and local Soviets and the formation on this basis of Soviet leading bodies in the republics, territories, regions, towns, districts, settlements and in the countryside shall take place in the autumn of 1989.

ON PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DECISIONS OF THE 27TH CPSU CONGRESS AND THE TASKS OF PROMOTING PERESTROIKA

1. Having discussed the Report by General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachev "On Progress in Implementing the Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Tasks of Promoting Perestroika" and also the main results achieved in the first half of the 12th Five-Year Plan period the 19th All-Union Party Conference states: the strategic course of the all-round and revolutionary renewal of Soviet society and acceleration of its social and economic advance, charted by the Party at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee and the 27th Party Congress, is being steadily put into practice. The country's slide down to an economic and socio-political crisis has been checked.

Under the impact of the ideas and deeds of perestroika our society is being consolidated, while the creative energy of the working class, the farmers and the intellectuals is on the upswing. People have come to believe in perestroika and are in favour of promoting it and making the revolutionary changes irreversible.

Democratisation and glasnost have changed cardinally the ideological, political and social climate.

The economic improvement of the country has begun, and its turn towards meeting the vital requirements of the people is under way. New methods of economic management are growing more effective, industrial amalgamations and enterprises are beginning to work on the lines of khozraschot and self-sufficiency in compliance with the Law on the State Enterprise (Association). The Law on the Cooperatives in the USSR has been drafted and after a wide discussion adopted. New and progressive forms of shop-floor labour relations based on contract and lease arrangements, and also self-employment are coming into their own. The organisational structures of management are being remodelled to provide most favourable conditions for effective economic management of primary economic units.

The work launched at the Party's initiative has made it possible to restore the rise in the real incomes of the working people. Practical measures are taken to step up the output of foodstuffs and consumer goods and expand housing construction. The reforms of education and medical care are under way. Intellectual and cultural activities are giving a powerful impetus to the country's advance.

A good deal has been done to reappraise the present-day realities of world development, renovate foreign policy, making it more dynamic.

Thus, perestroika is entering ever more deeply into the life of Soviet society, exerting an increasingly transforming effect on it.

The Party Conference notes that perestroika is a contradictory, complicated and difficult process accompanied by the struggle between old and new. And though positive tendencies are evident and the first results have already been achieved, a cardinal change in economic, social and cultural development is yet to occur. The mechanism of retardation has not yet been replaced by a mechanism of acceleration. The economy has largely remained on the path of extensive development. The pressure of the gross-output, quantity-oriented approach has not been overcome.

The economic structure remains, on the whole, cost-intensive. Scientific and technological progress is yet slow, and the plans for increasing the national income and resource-saving are not fulfilled. There has been no significant improvement in the quality of output. The country's finances are still strained. Also deficient is the supply of foodstuffs and consumer goods, and the population's demand for the services is not duly met. The housing problem remains acute.

Parallel with the democratisation of society, the radical economic reform is the groundwork of our entire perestroika. The economic reform is receiving a fresh impetus from the reform of the political system, which should be on the whole completed within the period of the current five-year plan. The rate and success of the planned restructuring of the political system will depend on this. Meanwhile, the new economic mechanism being introduced is not working properly because the relevant resolutions of the Party and Government are not duly implemented in central departments. Attitudes of equalisation and dependence are still a serious handicap for intensive economic growth. Progress has been too slow in providing conditions for a wide spread of the forms of economic management based on cooperative, contract and lease arrangements.

Perestroika is still being cramped by the hard legacy of stagnation. But the slow progress of the planned reforms cannot be explained by this alone. Many causes of this are to be sought in the defects of the present work of the Party, government and economic bodies and public organisations. There is a lack of due determination in carrying out the decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress and the Plenary Meetings of the CPSU Central Committee held in January and June 1987. New democratic methods of leadership, openness and glasnost find it hard to make their way, coming up against conservatism, inertia and dogmatism in thinking and acting. The attitude to work, to the practical implementation of tasks has not yet duly changed in various sections of society, including work collectives. Conscientious performance of duties has not yet become an accepted standard. Labour discipline falls short of the demands of perestroika. All this affects the end results of the work being done.

There are still many functionaries in every area of public, state and economic activities who cannot, or do not want to, part with the command style of administration, who respond painfully to new developments. There are many others who are frightened by the scope and depth of perestroika, who would prefer to stop half-way and limit the revolutionary content of perestroika by half-measures. At the same time, there have been attempts to speed up the developments artificially and skip whole stages, and there have been calls for doing everything at one go, with no regard for objective conditions and the level of public consciousness.

To put an end to the bureaucratic, command-style methods of administration the Conference resolutely supports the course of reforming the functions and style of the work of ministries and other central departments, eliminating unnecessary links and handing the rights of those links over to local bodies, considerably cutting back the state apparatus, and upgrading the qualification of the personnel employed there. This should be done as soon as possible.

Many Party organisations, which have failed to assess properly and in due time the causes behind retardation, and which bide their time, displaying indecision in combating outdated and mastering new forms and methods of work, fall short of the tasks set by perestroika.

All this goes to show that perestroika needs to be deepened and must be given reliable safeguards to become irreversible. The Conference stresses that perestroika is the only possible way of strengthening and developing socialism and solving the urgent problems of social development for the benefit of the people. We should proceed along this way with firm determination, displaying self-control and using realistically the possibilities available at each given stage.

The Conference considers that top priority is to be given today to a cardinal reform of the political system. Precisely this system is expected to open up new possibilities for deepening perestroika in every area of social life and guarantee that it is irreversible.

2. The Conference considers accelerated solution of the vital problems of people's well-being to be the most important task in the socio-economic sphere.

In the first place, food supply for the country's population should be improved substantially. This is a major socio-political question. The shortest way to solving it is to tap the potential of the collective and state farms in full, by spreading diverse forms of contract and lease arrangements, building a far-flung network of cooperatives both within the framework of the existing farms and in relations with other enterprises and sectors of the economy. Urgent measures must be taken to improve the transportation, processing, storage and marketing of farm produce and to make effective use of the means set aside for the re-equipment of enterprises and building new ones in these industries.

The Conference considers that conditions required for the collective and state farms to go over to new principles of management have matured in the country, and therefore all obstacles that are in the way should be removed, locally and in the centre. Special responsibility for solving this problem rests directly with collective and state farm leaders and experts, rural Communists, and the Soviets of People's Deputies.

All attempts must stop immediately to command collective and state farms, which are capable of solving independently the problems involved in their internal economic activity and of determining the forms of relationships among them and the forms of production servicing. The fundamental questions of modern agrarian policy are the remodelling of the countryside in social terms and improvement of the working and living conditions there, providing it with the required material and technical resources. The purpose of this policy is to change the relations of production in farming itself, and to restore the social and economic balance between town and countryside.

The market should be saturated with diverse goods and services and the output of consumer goods boosted, using the opportunities offered by the new mechanism of economic management. There is a need for a radical retooling of the light industry, as well as other industries producing goods that are in popular demand. Extensive use should be made of local resources, the possibilities of the cooperative movement, and self-employment. The local Soviets and work collectives should be made more interested in increasing the output of goods to meet the needs of the population in a given region.

The Conference approves of the measures being taken to greatly increase the volume and rate of housing construction and improve its quality in order to accomplish the task of providing practically every family with a separate flat or a house by the year 2000, the task set by the 27th CPSU Congress. Noting that the expansion of state-run, cooperative and individual housing construction and the initiative displayed by work collectives and local Soviets in building housing are held back today by the poor facilities of the construction industry and, above all, by the inadequate supply of construction materials and acute shortage of specialised machines and equipment, the Conference believes that these problems should be solved by government bodies of the USSR and the Union Republics without delay.

Simultaneously, problems involved in the proper maintenance of housing, ensuring democratic control over the distribution of apartments and fixing fair rents should be thoroughly considered and solved.

The Conference considers it to be a major task that the programmes adopted on medical care, environmental protection and improving the ecological situation in the country be carried out implicitly. All measures in these spheres must take people's interests into account, be socially oriented, while the economic approach and incentives and optimum scientific and engineering back-up should be made the basis of this work.

The line of the 27th CPSU Congress towards a social reorientation of the economy must become pivotal to the entire structural and investment policy, a reference point for determining the rate and proportions of reproduction. This reorientation is closely related with the new quality of economic growth, with the all-round intensification of production, resource-saving, acceleration of scientific and technological progress, and modernisation of mechanical engineering. The concept of the 13th Five-Year Plan should be formulated on the basis of such an approach.

As the economic reform is being promoted, it is essential to complete the building of a new economic mechanism and let every primary work collective, every worker know the principles of the reform. We must make people much more interested in the best end result, utterly overcome equalisation tendencies, apply more boldly and everywhere the principle of payment according to the amount, and especially, the quality, of the work done, and rule out a possibility of living a comfortable life while showing poor performance.

The Conference stresses that all economic and social problems can be accomplished only through the conscientious and highly productive work of Soviet people.

It is regarded expedient within the time limits of the current five-year plan to test and perfect the economic mechanism; remodel the organisational structures of management locally and in the centre; and restructure the system of foreign economic relations. It is necessary to speed up the transfer to wholesale trade in the means of production and carry out the programme of financial improvement of the national economy, including putting in order the budget, the financial and credit system and the activity of the banks. A pricing reform, including revision of wholesale, purchasing and retail prices, should be carried out after a countrywide discussion. The reform of retail prices should strictly conform to the principle that price changes must not adversely affect the living standards of the people.

3. There can be no revolutionary restructuring without invigorating in every way the intellectual and cultural potential of society, without promoting the progress of science and technology, without increasing the scientific and technological contribution of scientists and engineers, enhancing their prestige and improving their working conditions, without reaching modern standards in the entire system of education and raising the level of the general and political culture of the people.

The Conference stresses the great importance of intensively developing fundamental and applied sciences, of solving the acute problem of the practical application of discoveries and inventions and of ensuring constant ties between science and production. There is need for new forms of organising scientific research. Profound changes are indispensable in the social sciences, which should eradicate dogmatism and put an end to their isolation from practical activities. It is their duty to work creatively on problems related to the advance of socialism and world development at present and in the future, and to make them more useful in real terms for implementing our policy, for our society.

The Conference is in favour of further democratising science and culture, of creating and developing the material basis for this sphere in keeping with the demands put forward by the restructuring of our society. The Party is for diversity in the search for truth and in the artistic vision of truth, for competitiveness, innovation and continuity. So it expects the workers in science, literature and the arts to be most active, devoted and highly responsible before the people.

The Conference attaches paramount significance to building up the theoretical arsenal of perestroika, to renovating ideological work, ridding it of routine, empty verbiage and stereotypes and making its content and spirit correspond to the realities of life, and to the ability to conduct an honest and open dialogue with people on all questions of interest.

An important task facing the CPSU and the whole of our society is to educate the rising generation. The Conference demands that the reform of the secondary and higher schools be consistent and speeded up. This also refers to building up their facilities and, which is the main thing, enhancing the role of instructor and educator.

The Party sees the younger generation as a vigorous and driving force of perestroika. The Conference considers that it is necessary to have a powerful and integral state policy with regard to the rising generation that would enable the youth to become independent as soon as possible, reveal all its abilities and attain its goals in life, and to be better prepared for assuming in due course the economic, political and moral responsibility for the destiny of the country, for the fate of socialism.

The Conference is for completely restoring the Leninist traditions of the Party's guidance of the YCL, for respecting its organisational independence, its right to take part in political activities and elaborating a policy, and to defend the interests of the youth in Party, government, and economic bodies. The YCL bears special responsibility before the whole of society for working among the Young Pioneer movement, this first school of the civic spirit and morality.

The Conference stresses the need for greater efforts to solve problems concerning the interests of women. Women should be widely represented in the leading bodies at all levels. It is essential to enhance their role in society and in political activities, to protect the prestige and rights of mothers, to provide the necessary conditions for exercising their duties, and to display greater care for young families.

4. The Conference approves the proposals on the reform of the political system set forth in the Report by Mikhail Gorbachev, and is for their implementation in practice.

Delimitation of functions performed by Party and government bodies, restoration of full power to the Soviets at all levels are of key significance. This measure, together with the reform of the judiciary system and other legal institutions ensuring the regulation of relationships between the state and its citizens and the protection of the political, economic, social and personal rights of all members of society, is ultimately aimed at completing the building of the socialist state committed to the rule of law in which unconditional observance of law by all and everyone will be the highest principle.

The Conference considers that the main preconditions for an effective functioning of the political system are the reshaping of supreme power in the state, providing for the convocation of national congresses of people's deputies, the functioning of the bicameral Supreme Soviet of the USSR on a regular basis, the introduction of a post of President of the Supreme Soviet, a democratic use of their prerogatives and a constitutionally regulated interaction of all higher echelons of power, including the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

The Conference declares for rejuvenating, in the spirit of perestroika, the work of public organisations and associations—trade union, Komsomol, women's, veteran, etc., and creative unions—and for considerably enhancing their role in the work of the political system, and in realising and coordinating the interests of various strata of the population for the benefit of the whole people.

5. The Conference notes that, having assumed the revolutionary initiative, the CPSU has produced an objective critical analysis of the present state of our society and the Party itself; has proposed the programme of perestroika, rallying the mass of the people around its ideas; and organised practical work to effect a revolutionary restructuring of social relations. In this way the CPSU has demonstrated once again that it is the vehicle of the programmatic goals of society and the vanguard of the people.

In terms of the demarcation of the functions of Party and government bodies, we must fully revive the Leninist concept of the Party as the vanguard of society in the context of today's conditions. This vanguard, guided by Marxist-Leninist teaching, sees to the theoretical elaboration of the most crucial issues in the country's development, formulates the ideology of perestroika, and thereby—through organisational work among the masses, inspiring and encouraging them—imparts the correct, socialist direction to the advance of our multinational society. The Party carries forward the personnel policy, ensuring a rational appointment of cadres through the democratic mechanisms of the reformed political system. The CPSU should pursue its political line through the Communists working in government and economic bodies, in public organisations and work collectives. All Party organisations should act within the framework of the Constitution and Soviet laws.

The objectives of perestroika, crucial for the country and socialism, call for enhancing the leading role of the Party and for new criteria in assessing the fulfilment of this role.

The CPSU will never again in any way allow a recurrence of the things that happened during the personality cult and stagnation periods, which caused profound deformations in socialist society, hampered its development for decades, and resulted in tremendous human losses and incalculable moral and ideological damage.

6. The Conference approves the international activities of the CPSU Central Committee based on new political thinking and new methods used to make the peaceful intentions of the Soviet Union part of world politics. It confirms that only a political approach to resolving the contradictions in the world's development and to settling conflict situations can enable the USSR to play the role destined for it by history in ensuring the survival of humanity and its continued progress.

In this context the Conference highly appreciates the principled line and the practical measures for strengthening internationalist cooperation with the socialist countries, improving Soviet-American relations, invigorating the all-European process and expanding relations in Asia and the Pacific, in Latin America, and in Africa, and welcomes productive contacts with the non-aligned movement, with various political parties and with the world public. The Conference approves of the efforts to build up the prestige of the United Nations and achieve the settlement of regional conflicts on the basis of the principles of national reconciliation and free self-determination.

The Conference approves of the approach by the Soviet leadership to the problem of removing the threat of war by means of open and constructive dialogue and through disarmament, which opened the way to signing the INF Treaty and put on a practical plane the talks on nuclear, chemical and conventional weapons.

The Conference fully approves of the decision to withdraw troops from Afghanistan in accordance with the Geneva accords, and of conducting relations with that country as an independent, neutral and non-aligned state.

Foreign-policy activity should increasingly contribute to releasing the country's resources for peaceful construction, for perestroika, and should be closely tied in with the democratisation of society, including decision-making and verification of compliance with the decisions made.

All defence matters should henceforth be primarily oriented towards qualitative parameters—as regards technology and military science, and the structure of the armed forces. Our defence establishment is designed to reliably guarantee the security of the Soviet Union and its allies, and must therefore strictly abide by our defensive doctrine.

Perestroika requires a foreign policy adequately reflecting its humanistic essence, opening up for Soviet society broad opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation and diverse democratic ties with the rest of the world.

The Conference confirms the CPSU's policy of steadfast solidarity with the struggles being carried on by Communist and Workers' Parties, by all social forces for peace and social progress, for freedom and democracy.

7. Expressing the will of the 20 million Communists and the vital interests of the Soviet people, the Conference declares: the Party will persevere in promoting the drive for revolutionary perestroika, in making it irreversible, and in doing all it can to attain its goals.

The Conference calls on all Party organisations, all Communists and non-Party people to participate ever more actively in the renewal of society, which is of historic significance for the destiny of our Motherland.

8. The Conference deems it necessary for the CPSU Central Committee to see to it that all concrete proposals and requests expressed by the Conference's delegates on behalf of the Communists who elected them, and proposals and questions set forth in collective and individual messages sent to the Conference during the discussion of the Theses are duly examined, and that the results of the examination are publicised through the mass media.

ON DEMOCRATISING SOVIET SOCIETY AND REFORMING THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

1. The experience gained over the three years of perestroika, during the country's revolutionary renewal and the democratisation of the Party's activities and social affairs, has made a radical reform of the political system the order of the day.

The Soviet state was born as a tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat and, at a later stage of social development, evolved into a state of the whole people. The task now is to bring the Soviet state system into full conformity with this concept, for all matters to be decided by the people and their plenipotentiary representatives and to be handled under full and effective popular control.

The Conference holds that the forthcoming reform of the political system must tackle the following tasks:

— to give the widest possible scope to the self-governing of our society and create favourable conditions to encourage as much as possible the initiative of individuals, representative government bodies, Party and other public organisations and work collectives;

— to set a smoothly operating mechanism in motion to democratically identify and shape the interests and the will of all classes and social groups, to bring them into harmony and to realise them within the framework of Soviet domestic and foreign policy;

— to secure the necessary conditions for the further free development of every Soviet nation and nationality and for consolidating their friendship and equitable cooperation on an internationalist basis;

— to radically strengthen socialist legality and law and order so as to rule out usurpation or abuses of power, effectively combat bureaucratic and formalistic attitudes, and ensure reliable guarantees for the protection of the people's constitutional rights and freedoms and for the performance by citizens of their obligations before society and the state;

— to clearly delineate the functions of Party and government bodies in line with the Leninist concept of the Communist Party's role as the political vanguard of society and the role of the Soviet state as the entity organising and administering the people's power;

— to establish an effective mechanism to ensure timely self-renewal of the political system with due regard for changes in domestic and international conditions, as well as the development and promotion of the principles of socialist democracy and self-government in all social spheres.

The reform of the political system must be integral, comprehensive, coordinated with the country's economic and social restructuring, and implemented as quickly as possible.

2. The reform of the political system is primarily aimed at ensuring the full authority of the Soviets of People's Deputies as the basis of the socialist state system and self-government in our country.

The Conference deems it necessary to enhance the legislative, managerial and supervisory functions of the Soviets, to transfer decision-making powers to them on all important questions relating to government, and the economic and socio-cultural spheres, and to restore the prerogative of elective bodies over the executive and over the apparatus of the latter. Party policy—economic, social and ethnic—should be conducted primarily via the bodies of people's representatives.

The management of local affairs must be reorganised along the lines of self-government, self-financing and self-sufficiency and should dovetail regional interests with those of the entire country. This calls for effective guarantees ensuring the competence and independence of Soviets in the integral development of the areas they control. The Soviets should have stable sources of income based on long-term quotas, including revenue received from all economic enterprises in the areas under their jurisdiction, should accumulate funds for ensuring economic development, improving living standards, protecting the environment and tackling other urgent tasks, and should set up extra-budgetary development funds composed of additional incomes, including contributions from the public. At the same time, there must be firm guarantees that the revenues received as a result of efficient economic management and a socialist enterprising spirit will be freely administered on the local level.

The work of the Soviets should be reorganised: the scope of the questions which they alone decide at their sessions should be expanded; provision should be made to periodically relieve deputies from their regular office or shop floor duties to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities to their Soviet and its standing committees, and to their electorate; and the underlying principle should be that, within the scope of the law, every Soviet is fully entitled to choose the forms and methods of its work with due regard for local conditions. Nomination of several candidates, voting by secret ballot and electoral contests should be the rule in the formation of executive committees and in the appointment and endorsement of officials in charge of these committees' sections, and their departments and services. We must ensure a situation in which Soviets of all levels would work openly, in full view of the electorate.

The Conference favours the election of standing presidiums in local government bodies, except at village or township level, and of chairpersons in all Soviets without exception by secret ballot. The role of the representative bodies would be enhanced if the first secretaries of respective Party committees were, as a rule, recommended to serve as the Soviets' chairpersons.

A rule should be adopted barring members of the executive committees at all levels of local Soviets, the heads of these committees' sections and departments, judges, state arbitrators and procurators from serving as deputies of the respective Soviets. It would be useful to apply this principle to members of the government and heads of major agencies at the all-Union, republican and autonomous republican level.

The introduction of restrictions limiting the time in elective offices and in offices established and approved by the Soviets to two consecutive terms will be an important democratic move.

A substantive modernisation of the existing electoral system will be essential in restoring the prestige and the influence of the Soviets. While favourably assessing the experience accumulated in this field since the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the Conference deems it necessary to go further and ensure unlimited nomination of candidacies, their free and extensive discussion, the listing of more candidates in the ballots than there are seats to be filled, strict observance of a democratic electoral procedure, regular reports by deputies on their work, and a real mechanism for their recall. Broad powers should be granted to the election meetings of voters, which should become democratic forums for the competitive selection of candidates. The Soviets' work will be truly effective if the deputies elected to serve on them are principled people who think as statesmen should, who are firmly dedicated to socialist renewal and who are able to represent their electorate properly and vigorously exercise the rights they have been granted.

The Conference holds that a single, five-year term of office should be established for all Soviets of People's Deputies.

Having summed up the views expressed during the discussion of the CPSU Central Committee's Theses and noting the debate at the Conference itself, the delegates believe it necessary to restructure the supreme bodies of government; they hold that a USSR Congress of People's Deputies should be the country's supreme body of authority comprising, in addition to the deputies representing territorial and national-territorial constituencies, deputies representing the principal elements of our political system—the Party, the trade unions, the YCL, other mass public organisations, as well as cooperative, creative and scientific associations—all of whom should be democratically elected at congresses or plenary meetings of their governing bodies. The USSR Congress of People's Deputies could decide on the country's most important constitutional, political and socio-economic issues at annual sessions. The Congress would establish a relatively small bicameral USSR Supreme Soviet—a standing legislative, administrative and supervisory body—and elect by secret ballot the President of the Supreme Soviet. The lack of functional definition of the chambers should be eliminated and the work of the standing committees and of the deputies reorganised.

New approaches should be used in forming and organising the activities of Soviets at all other levels; these moves should then be given a legal basis.

3. The Conference sees the decentralisation of government and a redistribution of functions and powers to ensure the highest possible level of initiative and independence at local level as a major aspect of the reform of the political system. This effort should rule out departmentalism and self-serving localism and ensure the performance of the central

authority's functions without which it would be impossible to assert the advantages of socialism or to meet the all-Union interests of our vast, multinational country.

The Conference notes that the economic reform and the reform of the political system will enhance the role of the USSR Council of Ministers as the highest executive and administrative body of authority accountable to the USSR Supreme Soviet and increase its responsibility for conducting domestic and foreign policy and for drawing up and implementing economic, social and cultural development plans and long-term programmes.

Democratisation of the social sphere implies a systematic effort to simplify the structure and perfect the methods of work of the entire state apparatus. We must abolish redundant links and reduce the apparatus to an optimal size. We should have an apparatus of a new type based on high professionalism and capable of handling modern information technology. It should be democratically controlled by the people and able to promote economic and social progress. The Conference notes the positive effect produced by this effort and advocates accelerating it so that perestroika reaches every part of the administrative system. It would be useful to establish a uniform system of public and state control subordinated to the elective bodies.

In reforming the political system, primary attention should be paid to developing the Soviet socialist federation to bring about a further strengthening of the equal and fraternal union of all the USSR's nations and nationalities.

4. The Conference regards the establishment of a socialist state committed to the rule of law—a fully socialist form of organising political power—as a matter of fundamental importance. The solving of this task is inseparably linked with the ensurance of the fullest possible rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens, the responsibility of the state to the citizen and of the citizen to the state, with the raising of the prestige of Soviet laws and their strict observance by all Party and government bodies, public organisations, collectives and citizens, and with effective work of law enforcement agencies. A radical restructuring of their activities should be at the heart of the legal reform the Conference believes would be useful to effect within a relatively short time.

5. The reform of the political system presupposes a restructuring of public organisations, which are an important component of this system. Trade unions, the YCL, cooperatives, women's, veterans' and other organisations express the interests and aspirations of various sections of Soviet society and help the Party and the state to shape domestic and foreign policies in a way that organically combines the interests of all our people.

The recent emergence of several new public associations and alliances to assist the socialist renewal should be viewed as a positive development. At the same time, the Conference condemns all activities aimed at eroding our society's socialist foundations, fomenting ethnic or racial enmity, or preaching war, violence and immorality.

While highly appraising the activities of public organisations, the Conference notes the need to democratise their affairs, grant more independence and responsibility to their work and resolutely overcome such shortcomings as the obsession with organisational matters, formalistic attitudes and the decline of initiative. For its part, the CPSU will do its utmost to help public organisations reappraise their role in society and exploit their potential more vigorously in the cause of renewal. The aim is to further the advancement of the nationwide patriotic movement in support of perestroika.

Given the one-party system which has evolved in the course of our country's history, the existence of a permanent system ensuring free dialogue, criticism, self-criticism, self-control and self-assessment within the Party and within society is a matter of vital importance.

6. The Party is fully resolved to assist in the promotion of the working people's social rights, highlighting the advantages of socialism as a social system. Progress in these matters will depend on the consistent implementation of the economic reform and the acceleration of the country's socio-economic development. In this connection the Conference stresses the need to tighten labour discipline and encourage a committed and creative approach by workers to their jobs. In the final analysis, the level and the quality of the benefits society can offer its members depend on the attitude of every collective and of every Soviet person to their work.

The legislative definition of the procedure to be used in exercising these constitutional rights and liberties will be important for the expansion of our citizens' political rights and personal freedoms. Prominent among them are the human rights to take part in government, to express one's views on any issue and to enjoy freedom of conscience. The law must firmly protect the citizen's personal dignity, the inviolability of his home, the privacy of his correspondence, telephone conversations, etc. The rights and freedoms of Soviet citizens are inseparably linked with their civic duties and must go hand in hand with a universally unconditional respect for the law. Socialist democracy is incompatible with either arbitrary action or irresponsibility.

7. The Conference believes that the success of the reform of the political system decisively depends on the work of the Party and makes it binding on all Party organisations and all Communists to act vigorously and creatively in the tackling of the issues at hand. As the initiator and vigorous champion of the reform, the Party is effectively discharging its mission as the political vanguard of the working class and all working people.

The most salient feature of the historical juncture we have reached is the demand that the CPSU should be fully consonant with Lenin's concept of the Party's leading role in society not only in the content of its work but also in the methods it employs. This makes it imperative above all to abandon the practice of Party committees acting in place of government or economic bodies, to prohibit the adoption of Party decisions containing direct instructions addressed to the latter, and to strictly abide by the principle that the CPSU should pursue its political course through the Communists working in various spheres of social life.

The Conference states that the present aim is to completely abandon the command-style methods of work used by Party bodies and to ensure the strictest possible observance of democratic principles, of the USSR Constitution and of other laws. The competence of every Party organisation and the maturity of every Party worker should be judged according to their ability to conduct Party policy in the new way, through ideological, political and organisational work among the population.

8. It is impossible for the CPSU to play the vanguard role in perestroika and in the renewal of our society without a profound democratisation of the Party's activities. Our prime task is to fully restore the Leninist vision of democratic

centralism, which implies free discussion at the stage when a particular question is being considered, and united action when the majority has adopted the decision. Steps to expand democracy within the Party should be charted and taken so that all the elements of the CPSU can act in a spirit of Party comradeship, with free discussion of all topical questions of policy and practice, criticism, self-criticism, collectivism, conscious discipline and personal responsibility.

The Conference attaches great importance to democratising the work of the primary Party organisations. We should begin by promoting their independence, and freeing them from petty regimentation by superior bodies. We have to enhance the prestige of elective Party bodies and of secretaries of primary Party organisations, creating stimulating working conditions and overcoming the passivity of some of our Party members. The Conference notes that the degree of Communists' involvement in the work of Party committees falls short of the demands inherent in a cardinal restructuring of Party work, the development of democracy within the Party and the consolidation of the people's socialist self-government. Every Communist should become a champion of perestroika, of our society's revolutionary renewal.

Democratisation should also have an effect on the important matter of the admission of new members to the CPSU. We must move resolutely to end the regimentation of admission according to quotas which often create artificial barriers to the admission of progressive-minded, astute people. The main criteria by which the qualities of new applicants should be judged are his or her political stand, effective contribution to perestroika, attitude to work, and moral character. In addition, the opinion of the work collective should be considered objectively, and questions concerning admission to the Party should be discussed at open Party meetings.

9. The Conference regards the full restoration of the Leninist principle of collective discussion and decision-making as a key factor in democratising the Party. It is inadmissible for the Party apparatus to usurp the functions of elective bodies and for the role of Communists to be reduced to attendance of Party meetings and rubber-stamping lists of candidates and draft resolutions. The nature of Party meetings and of plenary meetings held by Party committees should be changed; they should be made more businesslike, critical

and constructive in matters of political leadership and ideological education.

The Conference favours more extensive participation by CPSU Central Committee members in the work of the Central Committee Politbureau, regular reports by the Politbureau to Central Committee plenary meetings, and the establishment of commissions made up of Central Committee members and dealing with various aspects of domestic and foreign policy.

Democratisation of the Party's affairs demands the broadest possible openness in the work of all Party organisations and their governing bodies. The Conference supports the proposal of publishing verbatim records of Party committee plenary meetings and draft decisions on major Party and public matters.

The Party's elective bodies are to play a special role in the renewal of relations within the Party. The Conference notes the need to have the bureaus of district, city, area, regional and territorial committees and the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Union Republics report to their committees, and Party committees and Party bureaus report to the Party's primary organisations. Communists should have the right to recall mid-term those members of elective Party bodies who fail to fulfil their duties or who have disgraced themselves, and, if necessary, to elect a new elective body in its entirety.

Democratisation makes it imperative to drastically update the Party's personnel policy. The formalistic approach to the selection and placement of key personnel, an approach based on sticking to a rigid list of approved cadres, is losing its effectiveness. The principal method the Party committees should adopt in these matters must include the organisation of personnel training, retraining and education, as well as applying democratic procedures in recommending candidates to high-level posts. Personnel matters should be finalised by election.

10. The Conference views democratisation of the electoral process within the Party as a matter of prime importance. The election of members and secretaries of all Party committees—up to and including the CPSU Central Committee—should feature free discussion by the candidates, voting by secret ballot, and an opportunity to nominate more candidates than

there are seats to be filled. It would be useful to recognise the right of Party organisations, as they elect delegates to a conference or a congress, to submit proposals for nominations to a higher Party body—a matter to be finalised by the delegates of the conference or congress.

The Conference supports the proposal on introducing a uniform five-year term of office for elective Party bodies, from the CPSU Central Committee down to the district committee. Since this term is relatively long, the Party should adopt the practice of holding, every two or three years, conferences which would be entitled to re-elect up to 20 per cent of the membership of Party committees. This rule also applies to the All-Union Conference of the CPSU.

Restrictions limiting the terms of office in elective posts are to be a major guarantee against stagnation within the body of the Party's functionaries. The Conference deems it useful to adopt the following rule beginning with the next election campaign in the CPSU: all members of bureaus and secretaries of Party committees, including members of the Central Committee Politbureau and the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, may be elected to the same office for no more than two consecutive terms.

11. In order to improve monitoring and auditing within the Party and create effective safeguards against subjectivism, arbitrary action and personal or random influences on Party policy, it is proposed to establish a single supervisory body—the Central Control and Auditing Commission of the CPSU—along with appropriate local bodies, and to abolish the Committee of Party Control under the CPSU Central Committee, the CPSU Central Auditing Commission, as well as the Party control and auditing commissions at local level. The new bodies should be elected by Party congresses and conferences, and be accountable to them.

12. In the context of perestroika and the delineation of the functions performed by Party committees, government bodies and economic agencies, the question of changes in the Party apparatus acquires considerable importance. The Conference maintains that the structure of the apparatus serving Party committees should be fully geared to the task of enhancing political leadership and attaining the objectives of the new stage of perestroika. The Party apparatus should be reorganised, reduced in size and made to operate more

efficiently without delay. The principle of the Party apparatus' strict subordination and accountability to elective Party bodies should be observed unflaggingly.

13. Reforming the political system is a large-scale and intensive task, requiring the adoption of responsible Party decisions and important legislative acts. These include essential amendments to the Constitution of the USSR, the constitutions of the Union and Autonomous Republics and the CPSU Rules.

The Conference recommends that Communists working in the relevant organs of government and administration and in mass public organisations take the necessary steps to implement the programme approved by the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU for democratising Soviet society and reforming the political system.

ON COMBATING BUREAUCRACY

1. The Conference notes that the decisions of the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and of the 27th Party Congress launched an effective offensive against bureaucracy and its uglier manifestations such as diktat, arbitrary administrative action in the economy, in the social, intellectual and cultural spheres, bureaucratic indifference to people's rights and needs, and high-handed dismissal of public opinion and of the social experience of working people. Against the background of stagnation and restraints on democratic institutions, bureaucracy grew to dangerous proportions and held back social progress. Bureaucratic distortions, particularly in political leadership, are incompatible with socialism as the vibrant creative effort of the masses.

The radical economic reform, the reform of the political system, the democratisation of the Party and of society, glasnost, the promotion of criticism and self-criticism, and the genuine involvement of the people in running the country are seriously undermining the positions of bureaucracy. But the bulk of the struggle is still ahead.

The managerial apparatus remains unreasonably cumbersome. A large part of its personnel is operating in isolation from the needs and interests of our society. The measures

devised by the Party to restructure the economy and other spheres of the country's life are often paralysed by the bureaucratic actions of ministries and government and economic agencies, and by the passivity of many Party organisations and Soviets of People's Deputies. Departmentalism and self-serving communalism remain widespread, and cases of falsified information, arbitrary action and violation of Soviet laws still occur. In many instances, criticism is being suppressed, as is the initiative displayed by working people.

It is the duty of all Party organisations and all Communists to make full use of the conditions created by perestroika for a consistent and uncompromising struggle against the social evil of bureaucracy, and for ensuring a high quality of the socialist managerial apparatus.

This struggle must be mounted in the economy through strict compliance with the laws on enterprises, cooperatives and the powers of work collectives' councils, through all-out and comprehensive promotion of the enterprises' khozraschot relations, autonomy and accountability, and of contract, lease-based and cooperative forms of economic activity, as well as of democracy on the shop floor, and through perfecting the organisational structures of management.

This struggle must be mounted in the social sphere by acting more vigorously to meet the material and everyday as well as cultural needs of the working people, by consistently and firmly adhering to the principle of socialist justice and the requirements of the law.

The struggle against bureaucracy in the social and political spheres must be conducted through a tireless effort to promote democracy , extensively develop forms of socialist self-government, enhance and strengthen the powers of the Soviets, ensure direct involvement of working people in taking and implementing government decisions, make the public better informed about the state of affairs in various spheres of the country's life and enhance people's control over the activities of government bodies. Any attempts at replacing democratic centralism with bureaucratic centralism must be firmly rebuffed.

In the intellectual, cultural and moral sphere, to mount an offensive against bureaucracy means reviving the relevant Leninist traditions and criteria, creatively using and developing the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, mastering and perfecting new political thinking and fighting without letup against any manifestations of dogmatism, Philistine morality, social parasitism and abuses of official status. A favourable climate for a free comparison of views and opinions must be created, and petty tutelage and the holdovers of the command-style in the administration of science and culture must be overcome resolutely.

The Party will succeed in rallying all social forces in the struggle against bureaucracy and win tangible victories only if it sets a convincing example of democratising its own activities and affairs, freeing them of any and all bureaucratic accretions.

2. The Conference assesses positively the steps taken under the decisions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee to restructure the managerial system, abolish some of its redundant elements and reduce the size of its apparatus, and considers that this effort should not be delayed and cannot be confined to a fixed-term campaign or to mechanical reshuffling. It must be conducted continuously and gear the managerial system to the changes constantly occurring in our society.

Work must be conducted to delegate more managerial functions and powers to lower levels, focusing centralised management primarily on the major processes. It is particularly important to perfect management directly on the shop floor, to have managers at all levels abide strictly by the statutory rights of work collectives, and to step up the activities of their councils.

It is the duty of Party organisations and of all Communists to ensure unwavering compliance with the principle of the managerial apparatus serving and being fully accountable to the elective bodies, that is, to Soviet government, and the people. Any actions taken by this apparatus and distorting and eroding the meaning of laws and government decisions are unconstitutional. Accessibility and openness to control and verification by working people, by the public is to be the rule in the work of the apparatus.

Competent organisation of work is the foremost task of the apparatus. This calls for substantive changes in the very procedure of the elaboration and approval of managerial decisions, making it as simple as possible, breaking the vicious

circle of overcautious endorsement of every decision by various officials, putting an end to unwarranted requests for reports on insignificant matters from the local-level bodies, and cutting paperwork by several times over. Several versions for solving the more important economic and social problems should be submitted for examination to experts and to the public and offered for nationwide discussion or referendums.

The functions and the responsibilities of each managerial unit and its staff must be clearly defined and delineated. There must be unflagging compliance with Lenin's recommendation that "under all circumstances without exception, collegiate management must be accompanied by the precisest definition of the personal responsibility of *every* individual for a *precisely* defined job".

The Conference holds that radical steps must be taken to correct the situation where managerial bodies bear virtually no financial responsibility for the adverse effects of their activities while those who act on their decisions—the work collectives—lack any effective means of influencing these bodies. The managerial apparatus must be incorporated into the system of new economic ties and relations; the wage-levelling approach to the remuneration of managerial personnel must be overcome, and the remuneration must be firmly linked with the cost-effective results of the work performed by individual industries, enterprises, organisations or territories.

While combating bureaucracy, we should also protect and strengthen in every way the prestige of managers, launching a large-scale drive to train and retrain managerial personnel, and considerably upgrading the managerial competence of executives and experts. A well-ordered, smoothly functioning and flexible managerial apparatus is to be an effective working tool of perestroika.

3. Government and public bodies and Party committees must be made fully accessible to working people; all delays, formalistic attitudes and pettifogging in the managerial apparatus must be eliminated; and situations where a person feels helpless before an indifferent and stubborn bureaucrat must be ruled out. Any attempts at infringing on the legitimate rights of citizens by following departmental instructions and resorting to red tape must be nipped in the bud.

The procedures used at offices, enterprises, Party committees, Soviets and trade unions for dealing with people's personal grievances must be improved substantively. Steps to evade consideration of justified requests and legitimate demands voiced by working people must be seen as a grave dereliction of duty inviting strict disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the post held. Ministers and other senior officials at Union, republican and local level must personally hear people directly in their work collectives and act promptly to tackle the questions that arise and remedy the problems the public is concerned about. Reports by the heads of these bodies in work collectives and in residential areas should become a standard procedure.

Leaders of Party bodies, up to and including CPSU Central Committee Secretaries, are to meet regularly with Communists and other working people to resolve topical issues in the activities of Party organisations and work collectives.

4. The Conference demands that all Party organisations make full use of the cadre policy in the struggle against bureaucracy. The selection and placement of cadre must be conducted openly and on a competitive basis. A climate of a principled attitude, of comradeship and of the senior cadres' responsibility to the collectives that elected them should be fully restored. Party organisations must cease to support those Communists who, while occupying important posts, show a formalistic attitude to their jobs and treat the needs of citizens with callous indifference. Such officials should be dismissed without delay, and attempts to shift them to other positions of authority must not be allowed.

5. The full exercise of the people's power and the large-scale involvement of citizens in the running of government and public affairs are the decisive factors in the elimination of bureaucracy.

The Conference emphasises the extreme importance of creating an integral system of public and state control which would operate under elective government bodies. Party organisations should make sure that this system relies on the initiative and activity of the popular masses, creative, veterans', women's and other independent public organisations expressing the interests of various sections and groups of the population.

The CPSU considers it its duty to create a climate in which every citizen is confident that he will have the weight of the Soviets and people's control bodies behind him in combating bureaucrats, that his labour and social rights will be championed by the trade unions, that the YCL will defend the interests of the younger generation, and that the law-enforcement agencies will offer reliable protection against arbitrary administrative practices or infringements of people's rights and freedoms.

The Conference holds that juridical conditions should be created for stepping up the struggle against bureaucracy and included in the legislative acts currently being drafted. The practice of applying the USSR Law on Complaining Against the Officials' Actions Impairing the Rights of Citizens should be improved.

The performance of the apparatus should be discussed and assessed regularly at public assemblies and meetings held by work collectives and public organisations.

The mass media should reveal the specific sources and manifestations of bureaucratic attitudes and publicise cases of their effective elimination. Satire, as a weapon against negative phenomena, should be used to full measure.

6. The Conference demands that all Party organisations act vigorously to eliminate all elements of bureaucracy in their own activities and to assert the Leninist style of work. Efforts to verify actual compliance with Party decisions and policy guidelines must be elevated to a radically new level. This is a matter of prime importance in the struggle against bureaucracy, and should be given the special attention of the Communists employed in the ministries, government departments, offices and organisations directly in charge of meeting people's requests and needs.

The principle that all Communists in executive posts are to report and be fully answerable to the primary Party organisations must be observed consistently; efforts should be undertaken to have every executive maintain close links with the masses, set an example of competence, hard-working dedication, modesty, accessibility and respect for people.

Every Party organisation should conduct its work along the lines of collective leadership, improve the practice of elective Party bodies reporting regularly to plenary meetings of Party committees and meetings of Communists, promote criticism and self-criticism and take to task those guilty of violating the standards of democracy within the Party. Not a single Party organisation, not a single worker must be exempt from control.

In combating bureaucracy, creative people with initiative should be relied upon, people who refuse to tolerate sluggishness or stagnation and who have demonstrated their ability to use democratic methods. Such people should be fully supported and recommended for Party work.

The 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU is calling on the Communists and all working people to be more active in combating bureaucracy at all levels of management, in all spheres of the society's life.

ON RELATIONS BETWEEN SOVIET NATIONALITIES

1. The Soviet socialist state founded by Vladimir Lenin has embodied the revolutionary will and aspirations of the multinational family of equal peoples. A common historical destiny is the groundwork for internationalist socialist fraternity. A unique union of republics is the result of the efforts of many generations of Soviet people. On its banner is inscribed the internationalist unity of the working people of all Soviet nations and nationalities, the right of nations to self-determination, revival and advancement of national cultures, accelerated progress of formerly backward national regions, and elimination of strife between nations. An integral economic complex has emerged, serving as the material foundation for the unity of the peoples of the Soviet Union. The economic, cultural and manpower potential of all republics and autonomous entities has risen immeasurably. A new historical community—the Soviet people—has come into being. A natural growth of national self-awareness is under way.

At the same time, the dynamism, witnessed during the initial stage of the formation of the multinational Soviet state, was substantially undermined by departure from the Leninist principles of the nationalities policy, by breaches of the rule of law during the personality cult period, and by the ideology and psychology of stagnation. The results achieved in resolving the nationalities question were raised to an absolute. It was claimed that there were no problems in relations between nationalities. The needs for the social, economic, and cultural development of certain republics, autonomous entities, and ethnic groups, were not fully taken into consideration. Many acute questions that derived from the very development of nations and nationalities were not resolved promptly enough. This led to public disaffection, which now and then escalated into conflicts. We still witness cases of national egoism and arrogance, sponging and localism. The negative phenomena that accumulated over the decades had been neglected and ignored for a long time, and were not properly assessed by the Party. Perestroika, democratisation and glasnost have revealed these phenomena and, at the same time, created conditions for overcoming them in a democratic way.

2. The Party Conference considers it a task of historic importance to persistently assert and creatively advance Lenin's norms and principles of the nationalities policy, and resolutely eliminate those artificial elements and deformations which have accumulated. The basis for this are the political course worked out by the 27th Congress of the CPSU, which combines satisfaction of the interests of all nations and nationalities with the country's general interests and needs, and our internationalist ideology, which is incompatible with any variety of chauvinism and nationalism.

Greater independence of the Union republics and autonomous entities is seen by the Party in indissoluble connection with their responsibility for the strengthening and progress of our multinational state. The socialist ideal is not a detrimental unification but a full-blooded and dynamic unity set in national diversity.

3. The Party Conference holds that due measures should be taken as part of the restructuring of the political system to further strengthen and develop the Soviet federation on democratic principles. This would mean first of all extending the rights of Union republics and autonomous entities by delimiting the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and that of the Soviet republics, by decentralising and transferring some government functions to local bodies, and emphasising their independence and responsibility in economic, social and cultural spheres, and in nature conservation.

One of the central tasks is to create conditions for the greater independence of regions, and to carry forward cooperation whereby each republic should be interested in improving the end results of its economic activity as the basis for its own well-being and the common prosperity and power of the Soviet Union. The radical economic reform and democratisation offer wide scope for the optimum combination of the interests of the national-state entities, on the one hand, and the country as a whole, on the other. It is essential that the working people should know how much their respective republic or region is producing, what its contribution to the country's economy is, and how much it gets. The idea of republics and regions going over to khozraschot principles is worth considering, with a clear definition of what they are expected to contribute to the Union-wide programmes.

The internationalisation of the economy and all other areas of society is a law-governed process. Any gravitation towards national isolation can only cause economic and cultural impoverishment.

We shall have to legislatively elaborate an essentially new mechanism for forming republican and local budgets, and to substantially enhance their role in the socio-economic development of the various regions. It is essential to secure effective interaction by territorial bodies of management and USSR ministries and departments, and all-Union enterprises. The responsibility of the republican as well as Union bodies of management for the comprehensive development of every region should be enhanced. The question of direct ties between Union republics calls for a deep-going juridical examination and for practical solutions.

The work of those institutions of the political system through which the interests of nationalities are determined and coordinated, should be invigorated. It is of the utmost importance here to enhance the role of Soviets of People's Deputies, and notably the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet, its standing commissions, and also the government of the USSR. It is desirable to create standing commissions on interethnic relations under the USSR Supreme Soviet, the Supreme Soviets of the Union and Autonomous republics, and, wherever necessary, under local Soviets. The question of establishing a special governmental body for nationalities and ethnic relations should be considered.

The Conference recommends that the legislation on the Union and Autonomous republics, and autonomous regions and areas, should be elaborated upon and updated in view of the new realities, giving fuller definitions of their rights and duties, and spelling out the principles of self-government and the representation of all nationalities on the bodies of power at the centre and locally. This will call for appropriate amendments in the Constitution of the USSR and the Constitutions of Union and Autonomous republics.

4. It is important that in every national region economic and social progress should be accompanied by spiritual progress based on the cultural identity of nations and nationalities. Socialist culture, which is developing as a multinational culture, should continue to be a powerful factor behind the ideological and moral consolidation of our society.

We should see to it that the ethnic groups residing outside their national territories, or ethnic groups that have no such territories, should be granted more opportunities to fulfil their national cultural needs, especially in education, communication, and folk art. They should also have the opportunity to form national culture centres, to use the mass media, and to satisfy their religious requirements.

The most important principle of our multinational state is the free development and equal use by all Soviet citizens of their mother tongues, and the learning of Russian, which has been voluntarily adopted by Soviet people as a means of communication between nations. Every condition should be provided for national-Russian bilingualism to develop harmoniously and naturally, with an eye to the specific features of every region, and without formalism; more concern should be shown for the active functioning of national languages in various spheres of political, public and cultural life; the study of the language of the republic by citizens of other nationalities residing in it, above all by children and young people, should be encouraged. All this should not be contraposed to the democratic principle of free choice of the language of instruction.

5. Every generation of Soviet people goes through the school of patriotism and internationalism in its own way. The important thing is that already in the individual's initial social experience, at home and in school, in the Young Pioneer and YCL organisations, these values should combine organically

as an indissoluble unity, ruling out both national nihilism and national exclusiveness. It is desirable to trace the sources of the friendship of the Soviet peoples, to actively mould the culture of communication between nationalities, and to cultivate respect for the traditions, language, art, and history of the peoples of the USSR and other peoples of the world. Service in the Soviet Armed Forces should be a real school of internationalism.

The anniversary of the formation of the USSR, which is a countrywide holiday, should be given a greater social and political significance.

Experience has shown that where the practice of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism is no more than perfunctory, national narrow-mindedness and chauvinistic arrogance come to the fore. Combatting these ugly deviations and helping to eliminate the reasons for them, is the civic duty of every Soviet citizen. All actions that divide nations or nationalities, attempts at impinging upon the rights of citizens of any nationality should be considered morally unacceptable and contrary to the interests of the Soviet Union.

People must learn to distinguish between true national interests and their nationalistic perversion. Any claims to national exclusiveness are intolerable and insulting, and this also goes for the nation in whose name they are voiced. In the spirit of the Leninist tradition one should first of all combat one's "own" nationalism and chauvinism, and this should be done primarily by members of the nationality concerned.

6. The Conference notes that in our country the existence of many nations and nationalities is a powerful source of growth and mutual spiritual enrichment. The shaping of the socialist, internationalist way of life is the business of the whole Party, of all Soviet people. The thing to do is mobilise the political experience, the labour ethics, and moral potential of the working class, the farmers, and the intelligentsia, and their deep-rooted commitment to good-neighbourly relations of different peoples. A special part here is to be played by the Soviet intelligentsia. The general climate of relations between nationalities depends to an enormous extent on its civic maturity and understanding of the vital interests of its people and society as a whole.

The Conference stresses that any nationalities problems call for a well-thought-out and comprehensive approach based on in-depth analysis and objective assessment of every specific situation. They must be tackled in a calm spirit, with a strong sense of responsibility, in the framework of socialist democracy and legality, above all by meeting each other halfway, with an eye to the ongoing processes of revolutionary renewal, and without prejudice to the internationalist unity of the Soviet people. It is essential to create a social climate in which people of any nationality should feel at home in any part of our socialist homeland.

7. The current nationalities policy requires profound scientific and theoretical study. This is a responsible social assignment for research institutions and experts. To fulfil it successfully, we shall have to set up appropriate organisational facilities, find the requisite personnel, and unite the efforts of the scientific community. It is desirable to study the question of founding an all-Union research centre for the comprehensive study of topical issues concerning relations between nationalities, and to expand research and information in this field.

8. Party organisations and Communists of all nationalities are called upon to be the cementing force, the heart and soul of the socialist union of nations, and active bearers of internationalism. All their activity must help rally the working people in the drive for perestroika, cultivate a sound public opinion, and lead people ahead. In the spirit of Leninism, it is essential that all nations and nationalities should be represented on Party, government, trade union, YCL, and economic bodies, those at all-Union level included, so that the composition of the leading government bodies should reflect the multinational structure of Soviet society as fully as possible.

The Conference backs the proposal of the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee to hold a Central Committee Plenary Meeting on relations among nationalities.

The Conference is deeply convinced that our present and future reposes on the consolidation and unity of all Soviet peoples. It is the patriotic and internationalist duty of every citizen, every Communist, to cherish and enhance everything that works for the unity of Soviet society as the basis for the free development and prosperity of all the peoples of the USSR, for the strengthening of our common homeland. Lenin called for this, and that is the road followed by the Communist Party.

ON GLASNOST

1. Guided by the interests of socialism and perestroika, the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU considers further development of glasnost one of its most crucial political objectives.

The first three years of perestroika have shown convincingly that glasnost in the activity of Party, government, and public organisations, and the mass media, the unfolding of criticism and self-criticism, and the assertion of openness and truthfulness in politics, have enabled the Party, and the people as a whole, to better understand their past and present, to identify the retardation factors, and arouse powerful patriotic forces to active and purposeful work for the good of the country and socialism. The introduction of glasnost in public affairs has enabled us to assess the situation in the country deeply and objectively, with the participation of the public at large; to collectively work out the fundamental guidelines for accelerating socio-economic development, and secure the active and committed support of the working people for the policy of perestroika of the CPSU.

The Conference considers glasnost a developing process, and stresses that its consistent extension is an indispensable condition for expressing the democratic essence of the socialist system, its commitment to the people, the individual's involvement in all public affairs, the affairs of state and the collective, an effective guarantee against any deformation of socialism based on public control over the activity of all social institutions, and of bodies of power and government.

The Conference sees glasnost as a necessary condition for the socialist self-government of the people, for the enactment of constitutional rights, freedoms and obligations; as a means of collating and accumulating the entire diversity of interests and the socialist plurality of opinions that exist in Soviet society; as an effective way of strengthening internationalism and cultivating socialist patriotism, and as a way of consolidating the humanistic image of socialism. Glasnost in all spheres of life is one of the most crucial conditions for the further promotion of perestroika processes, for making perestroika irreversible.

On the international scene, reflecting the positions of governments and peoples, glasnost is helping the cause of peace and cooperation, promoting the ideas of a nuclear-free and non-violent world, and the shaping of advanced and civilised international relations. Being a means for the conduct of an open foreign policy, it is helping public organisations, work collectives, and the mass of working people, people in science and culture to establish international contacts, to further people-to-people diplomacy; it helps to resolve complicated international problems at inter-state level and along inter-governmental channels.

In the final analysis, glasnost, criticism and self-criticism serve the interests of the people; they reflect the openness of society's political system, and speak of its strength, political viability, and moral health.

2. At the same time the Conference notes that being a powerful perestroika weapon, glasnost needs to be deepened and supported. Large amounts of information are still kept out of the reach of the general public, are not being used for accelerating socio-economic and cultural development, for enhancing the political culture of the people and administrative cadres. Attempts are on record to hold down glasnost in Party, government and public organisations, work collectives, and the mass media. Departmental and localist barriers are often erected to block glasnost. The striving to inform the public of various faults, abuses and cases of red tape and arrogance among Communists, as well as other negative things, is encountering administrative resistance. The stream of citizens' letters containing various complaints against Party bodies and the mass media is not running dry. There is still persecution, even reprisals, for criticism. There are still cases when glasnost is used in the interests of personal or group ambitions, destroying normal communication and comradely exactingness among people. The inalienable principle of true glasnost, which means that free expression of opinions must work to elevate the personality and protect the dignity of people rather than humiliate them with accusations and name-calling, is not always adhered to.

The Conference stresses that consistent expansion of glasnost is a necessary condition for the democratisation of all spheres of society, and for the renewal of socialism. As it expands glasnost, the Party follows Lenin's thought that the masses should know everything, that they should have an opportunity to judge, and to be aware of what they are accepting. The Communist Party and the people of the Soviet Union want the truth; they want exhaustive and objective information about everything that occurs in their society. Glasnost must serve the aim of consolidating all public forces on the ideas and principles of perestroika.

3. The Conference sees it as an urgent task of the Party to consolidate and promote in every way the basic principles of glasnost: that every citizen has the inalienable right to obtain exhaustive and authentic information on any question of public life that is not a state or military secret, and the right to open and free discussion of any socially significant issue.

The Conference notes that the Party is called upon to set an example of initiative in unfolding glasnost. Communists and the public at large should be thoroughly informed about the work of the Party's governing bodies and of local Party organisations, their committees, and the work of top-ranking cadres. Party forums and meetings should be open, and questions of Party life and the Party's guidance of socialist construction, should be freely discussed. Critical remarks, opinions and proposals submitted by the public should be carefully examined, and projected important decisions should be published and discussed. All this constitutes the open nature of the Party's policy, and contributes to the strengthening of its ties with society.

It is the duty of Party leaders at all levels and members of elective Party bodies to systematically inform Party organisations, work collectives and the public at large about their work. It is the duty of Party organisations to cultivate a culture of glasnost, and the skills of democratic debate and comradely discussion.

The Conference believes that it is necessary to bring existing instructions and regulations concerning the work of Party committees and organisations abreast of the democratisation of Party life. Free access of members of elective Party bodies to sittings of the Party committee bureaux accountable to them, including the Political Bureau of the CPSU Central Committee, should be envisaged, as should the right to use documents, information, and data that is in the hands of the Party committee and its apparatus.

The Conference attaches special significance to glasnost in the personnel policy, and to shaping a democratic mechanism, relying on public opinion, for the promotion of leading cadres.

4. The Conference reaffirms that glasnost and open control and criticism by the masses is an essential condition for the effective functioning of the bodies of government. Glasnost should be extended at all stages of their work, planning and administration; public opinion should be studied and taken into account, and public discussion should be practised of nationwide and regional economic, ethnic, youth, ecological, social, and other problems.

Heads of enterprises and offices, the boards of collective farms and cooperatives, and the councils of work collectives are called upon to act openly. The working people must be kept informed of decisions on production and social issues; they must know the results achieved by their collectives, including the financial situation. The administration must let the collective know in good time of projected decisions that affect the interests of people, and take account of their attitude towards the planned measures.

Glasnost is an obligatory aspect of the work done by people's control and law-enforcement agencies. Information about their work should be systematically published, as should crime statistics and measures of crime prevention.

Any unjustified restrictions on the use of socio-economic and political statistics and information on the ecological situation should be lifted; a system of gathering, processing and disseminating such statistics based on the latest communication technology should be set up; all library departments should be open to the public, and use of archive material should be regulated by legislation.

The Conference calls on all public organisations to discharge their statutory functions freely and publicly, providing exhaustive information on the work of their congresses, conferences, elective bodies, and on the decisions they take.

5. The Conference notes the important role played by the mass media in expanding glasnost. They are called upon to cover all aspects of the activity of Party, government and public organisations, to further the consolidation of socialist society, to actively propagate accumulated experience, and to act as an instrument of people's control over the state of affairs in the country. The Conference considers it absolutely intolerable for anyone to block critical publications in the

press, just as it is opposed to the publication of unobjective information that affects the honour and dignity of a citizen. Glasnost presupposes social, legal, and moral responsibility of the mass media.

The indispensable requirement here is ideological commitment and lofty morals, competence, strict abidance by professional ethics and properly verified information, and the right of every citizen subjected to criticism to have his properly argued reply published in the same organ of the press. Openness and criticism should not serve to encourage cliquism, demagogy, or national, regional or corporate egoism. The points of view of all sides in a controversy should be reflected in the mass media impartially and without distortion. No one has a monopoly on the truth, and there should be no monopoly on glasnost.

6. The Conference holds that glasnost has wholly justified itself, and that it should be promoted in every way in future. For that, it should be considered essential to create legal guarantees of glasnost. The right of citizens of the USSR to information should be enshrined in the Constitution. Legislative acts should be worked out to define the rights and duties of the state, of office-holders and citizens, in carrying forward the principles of glasnost. A system of continuous and exhaustive information has to be set up about the state of affairs at enterprises, in villages and towns, regions, republics, and the country as a whole, with the right of citizens, the mass media, work collectives, and public organisations to receive the information they wish being legally enacted. The limits of essential secrecy and official secrets should be clearly defined, and responsibility should be established for the dissemination of information that constitutes a state or military secret or that impinges upon the legitimate rights of citizens, or disrupts public order, security, or public health and morality. The responsibility for obstructing citizens in the exercise of their right to information, for concealing information, and for distorting or using it for illegal ends should also be clearly defined.

Glasnost must not be used to the detriment of the interests of the Soviet state and society, or the rights of individuals; or to preach war and violence, racism, and national and religious intolerance, to propagate cruelty or disseminate pornography. Manipulation of glasnost should be ruled out.

By asserting and expanding glasnost in Party, government and public affairs, and in the mass media, the Party and Soviet society have set in motion the powerful potential of the socialist system, its vast resources. Without glasnost there is no perestroika, no democracy. Glasnost is the natural climate for the life and progress of democratic humane socialism.

The Conference calls on all Communists, all Party organisations, to carry the truth to the masses and actively advance socialist democracy, the culture of debate, and to create favourable conditions for lively and outspoken discussion of each and every issue, for the initiative and creative thinking of Soviet people.

The Conference is sure that all Communists will contribute to the consolidation of glasnost as a standard of life in socialist society.

ON LEGAL REFORM

1. The All-Union Party Conference notes that significant measures on the legal backing of perestroika have been implemented since the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. However, they must be regarded merely as a beginning in the widespread effort of shaping a socialist rule-of-law state. Within the next few years we shall have to implement a large-scale legal reform in order to secure the supremacy of the statute of the law in all spheres of society's life and to strengthen the mechanisms of maintaining socialist law and order on the basis of developing government by the people.

2. Of great importance here is the improvement of the legislative activity of the supreme authorities of the USSR, the Union and Autonomous Republics aimed at consolidating the constitutional regime in the country and dramatically increasing the role played by Soviet laws that regulate the major areas of social relations, and consistently applying the principle: what is not forbidden by the law is permissible. It is especially important to democratise the legislative process, which must proceed on the basis of glasnost, competent

scientific evaluation, and discussion of bills with the participation of the general public, of the entire people.

3. A cardinal review, codification and systematisation of legislation must be an inalienable part of the legal reform. From the angle of the new conditions of economic management, the humanisation and democratisation of public life, and greater emphasis on prevention of the violation of the law, we have to introduce essential changes in legislation on socialist property, planning, financial and economic relations, taxation, environmental protection, in the norms regulating property turnover, labour, housing, pensions and other issues of daily life, and to radically revise criminal, administrative, procedural, and correctional labour legislation. It is necessary to devote the utmost attention to the legal protection of the individual, to consolidate the guarantees of the political, economic and social rights and freedoms of Soviet people. It is also essential to enhance the responsibility of every citizen to his or her work collective, the state and the society as a whole. To make law and government decisions conform strictly to the requirements of the Constitution of the USSR, it would be useful to set up a Committee for Constitutional Supervision and also to tighten control over the strict observance of legal precepts in departmental normative acts and to see to it that the number of such acts should be drastically reduced.

4. The Conference regards enhancing the role of courts of law in the system of socialist democracy as one of the essential tasks of perestroika. It is necessary to substantially consolidate the guarantees of such principles of Soviet judicial procedure as contentious proceedings, openness, unswerving observance of the presumption of innocence, and the inadmissibility of both accusatorial bias and connivance with regard to those who have violated the Soviet law. It is necessary to raise the authority of the courts of law, to secure unconditional independence of judges and their subordination to the law alone, and to define concrete sanctions for interference in their activity and contempt of court. The election of district, city, area, regional and territorial courts by superior Soviets of People's Deputies and the institution of longer terms of office for them must be one of the guarantees of strengthening the independence of judges. In order to raise impartiality in the administration of justice, the role and responsibility of people's assessors it is advisable to increase their number when hearing more involved cases in court.

5. In the conditions of the economic reform, the introduction of khozraschot, self-government and self-financing, there is a need for extending the full powers of state arbitration in strengthening contractual discipline, protection of the rights of enterprises and cooperatives, for essentially upgrading the role of judicial authorities, and for consolidating the legal services in the Soviets of People's Deputies, ministries and government agencies, and economic organisations.

6. It is necessary to increase the responsibility of the Procurator's Office, to restore in full measure the Leninist principles of procuratorial supervision, which is called upon to watch closely over the execution and the uniform interpretation and application of laws throughout the country, and persistently combat violations of socialist legality by whomsoever they have been committed. To this end, it is necessary to further strengthen the independence of the procurators and to preclude any pressure on them or interference with their activities.

7. Constant attention must be paid to improving the work of the militia, to raising the cultural standard and the professional education of those employed in interior affairs bodies, securing their strict observance of socialist legality, strengthening their ties with work collectives and the local community, and to eliminating abuses in their work. To make better use of the potentialities of interior affairs bodies in crime control, it is advisable to assign investigation of the bulk of criminal cases to the investigative apparatus of the Internal Affairs Ministry, making it an autonomous structure over which the republican and local interior affairs bodies would have no control, to raise the responsibility of investigators, to strengthen the legal guarantees of the legitimacy of their work, and to reinforce procuratorial supervision over preliminary investigations.

8. The Conference attaches great importance to increasing the role of the Bar as a self-governing association rendering legal aid to citizens, state enterprises and cooperative societies, to representing their interests in courts, in other governmental bodies and public organisations. The participation of defence counsel in preliminary investigations and court proceedings must be extended.

9. An urgent task is to provide personnel support for the legal reform. This presupposes a coherent system of selection, education, training and retraining of lawyers who are assigned to work in Soviets of People's Deputies, in the national economy, in the militia and other law-enforcement bodies. To this end, we must reorganise the training of researchers and more highly-qualified teachers, end their isolation from practice, and raise their competence in settling legal questions related to the economic reform.

10. The formation of a socialist rule-of-law state, the reform of the political system and the introduction of new methods of economic management, call for an effective remodelling of the legal education of the population. Its juridical education must be a single nationwide and Party programme embracing all sectors of the working people and the leading personnel both at the centre and in the localities. Legal literature must be available to every Soviet citizen and published in an adequate number of copies. The general secondary, vocational and higher schools, the mass media, creative workers' unions, and other public organisations must play an important role in cultivating respect for Soviet law and upholding socialist democracy, civil activity and responsibility.

11. The Conference deems it expedient that the CPSU Central Committee, the USSR Supreme Soviet and the USSR Council of Ministers, together with public and scientific organisations, elaborate and implement a concrete plan of action in the nearest future in order to carry out the legal reform in our country.

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